תַּנְחוּמִים: J Jozier

OR

# Divine Comforts,

Antidoting

## *Inward Perplexities*

OF

# MIND.

IN A

# DISCOURSE

UPON

## PSAL. XCIV. *Ver.* 19.

By *T. Sharp* M. A. late Minister of the Gospel at *Leeds*.

With some short Remarks upon the Author.

Μέμνησο —— ἐπὶ παντὸς τοῦ εἰς λύπην σὲ προσαγομένου τούτῳ χρῆσθαι τῷ δόγματι, ὃτι οὐ τοῦτο ἀτύχημα, ἀλλὰ τὸ φέρειν αὐτὸ γενναίως εὐτύχημα, Marc. Antonin. l. 4. §. 49.

*LONDON*,

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst* at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapside*; And *John Whitworth* Bookseller in *Leeds*, 1700.

# THE PREFACE,

## Rendering an Account of this Publication.

COmfort *is a thing so pleasing, so amiable, so tempting, that it invites every ones Embraces, and oft is liable to the Confident and Impudent Arrests and Rapes of Presumptious and Wanton Hearts, which in a Licentious Age, do not entertain so much Solicitude to be Good as Quiet.* Degenerate Nature *is loth to divest it self of its evil Dispositions, as those Satisfactions which are agreeable to its predominate Qualities and Constitution, because this imports no less than its own Dissolution and Ruin, (as far as Corrupt) and in this*

*Gulf the Generality Periſh, it being, like the Dead Sea, ſmooth though muddy. But when a daring Light boldly ruſhes into the Conſcience, and as our Redeemer once in* Jeruſalem, *overturns the Tables, and with Whips and Scorpions drives out the old Buyers and Sellers, the Corruptions that converted the Temple of God, Mans Heart, into a Den of Thieves and Murderers, and thus imbitters all his delicious Luſts, diſgraces and deſtroys his falſe and deluſory Carnal Joys, (which muſt certainly be done either on Earth or in Hell) then does he feel a neceſſity laid upon him to enquire after another Balſom, to heal his broken Heart and Hopes, than that which grows in his own Garden, and for a ſecure Relief, is conſtrain'd to make towards Heaven.*

*Yet his purſuits admit of great varieties according to the Vigour and Power of that Light which arraigns him, and the Conduct of thoſe different Guides he relies upon, one of the firſt Effects of theſe Convictions, being* Self-diffidence. *Some therefore into whoſe Souls the Dart is not ſtruck home and deep enough, yet feel ſome Pain and Smart, and are diſeaſed with and impatient of it, muſt and will have Eaſe, making that their principal Care and End, without any due Endeavours to proceed*

*in*

*in a regular Method to gain it:* Therefore Ignorance and Appetite being their Leaders, they in this dark Night ſoon get to Bed, and dream themſelves into a pretty Paradiſe. *Theſe poſſeſs* Peace *without its Harbinger, true* Penitence; *and therefore muſt be more ſadly diſpoſſeſs'd of it, than they ſweetly enjoy it, Impoſtorous Pleaſures never being Permanent. Others with more Art but as little Strength, make toward the ſame Port by another Wind, frighted into ſomething like* Repentance *and* Faith, *and other Parts of* Religion, *by the Terrors of the* Almighty, *as knowing theſe the only Line and Courſe to bring them to the Haven of Reſt: Tet will not lay on Sail enough, nor exactly direct upon the right Point, but having a ſlothful Heart and Hand, and a ſiniſter Aim, they Anchor upon the Quick-ſands of their own fleeting, fading Formalities and Mockſhews of Religiouſneſs, as a ſufficient Ground and Bottom to ſtay and ſettle their Peace upon, yet at length under fair Hopes, and in a Serene Calm, ſink and are ſwallowed up of Everlaſting Woes.*

*The Deſign of this Diſcourſe is to prevail with theſe, and all, by the noble Magnetiſm of a thing ſo deſirable and delightful as true and ſolid Conſolation to engage in real Goodneſs,*

*which is the only way thereto, it being as impossible for Wickedness and sound content of Mind to cohabit, as for Light and Darkness; before this therefore would I lay the greatest Discouragements, as there is just reason, whilst I attempt to promote the other, which is mainly in my Eye throughout.*

*A small Canton of this Tract was, upon promise to be Transcribed, at the request of a Person grievously afflicted with horrid* Injections *(I call them rather than* Spontaneous Cogitations*) relating to* God *and* Providence; *which whilst in Hand, my Family was diminish'd by the Death of a Lovely Child, this enlarged my Meditations. Concurrent with these was a Report, that if I continued in an obstinate refusal (as I long had done) to appear in Print, some Sermons taken from me in Short-hand would unknown to me croud into the World, wherein perhaps we both might suffer. To prevent this I undertook to stop a Gap with this little Piece, and commit it to the publick Censure and Conscience: Only two parcels of it were delivered to an Auditory, in the rest I took the liberty of a Writer rather than a Preacher. If any thing here seem above the Capacity of the Vulgar, yet the greatest part is not. I endeavoured to suit those for whose sake*

*I was*

*'twas Publiſh'd ſo, that it might not altogether nauſeate the Learned and Ingenious of my Hearers and Readers by an inſipid flatneſs of Stile, or emptineſs of Matter, nor ſoar aloft out of the reach of the Unlearned and Plain. I would ſpeak Things, not mere Words and Wind, and with ſolidity of Sence Profit, rather than pleaſe with variety of Phraſes: If I miſs of my aim 'tis not the fault of my Subject but Intellect, which in the greateſt depths of matter, I always find extreme ſhallow of Apprehenſion, skinning over things rather than diving into them. And this is that piece of pride that hath hitherto upheld my Averſation to the Preſs, in a fear to betray my Weakneſs. But then again I am too proud willingly to be deem'd and doom'd for a Fool in that of* Seneca, Niſi ſapient ſua non placent. Omnis ſtultitia laborat faſtidio ſui; *Vain Man would be wiſe, and now am I tempted to another, and no diminutive act of Arrogance, viz.* In lawful indeavours for Publick Good to act reſolutely and contemn the World. *A bad Proficient I acknowledge my ſelf in this Philoſophy or love of Wiſdom, yet would aſpire after thus much of it,* To ſubmit my Follies to the Correction of the Wiſe, *but to let the Captious*

Id agendum ut non verbis ſerviamus, ſed ſenſibus, *Senec. Ep.* 9.

Epiſt. 9.

lib. 4. cap. 5. *Captious know that I read in* Arrianus, οὐχὶ παρελθὼν εἰς μέσον, κηρύσσεις, ὅτι εἰρήνην ἄγεις πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, ὅτι ἂν ἐκεῖνοι ποιῶσι; καὶ μάλις' ἐκείνων καταγελᾶς, ὅσοι σε βλέπειν δοκοῦσιν; ἀνθρωπόδα ταῦτα οὐκ οἶδεν, οὐδὲ τίς εἰμι, οὐδὲ πῶς μοι τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ κακόν· ὅτι ὁ πρόσοδος αὐτοῖς πρὸς τὰ ἐμά.

---

SOME

# *Some ſhort* REMARKS *upon the Author.*

MR. *Thomas Sharp* was Born in *Little Horton*, near *Bradford*, in *Yorkſhire*, of Religious Parents, who ſeeing his Promptneſs and Induſtry for attaining Humane Learning, and hopefulneſs for Religion, dedicated him to God in the Work of the Miniſtry, though he was their eldeſt Son, and likely to enjoy a conſiderable Eſtate: Having made good Proficiency in Country Schools, he was ſent up to *Cambridge* about the Year 1649. or 1650. admitted in *Clare-Hall* under the tuition of the famous Mr. *David Clarkſon*, his Mother's Brother, who when he left the Univerſity, committed him to the care of Mr. *John Tillotſon* that great Man, afterwards Arch-biſhop of *Canterbury*; where he was very Studious and became an excellent Scholar, having a capacious Soul, of admirable Natural Parts, which being cultivated by External Advantages, and his own more than ordinary Induſtry, he became an *univerſal Scholar*, comprehending the whole

whole *Encyclopædia* of all profitable Literature, a ſolid *Logician*, a good *Linguiſt*, a fluent *Rhetorician*, a profound *Philoſopher*, and very skilful in the *Mathematicks*.

Being thus well accompliſhed for Learning and Parts, after he had taken his Degrees in the Univerſity, the firſt Eſſay he made upon the Publick Stage was about *Peterborough*, where ſtaying but a little ſeaſon, he came into his Native Country about the Year 1660. and his Uncle Mr. *William Clarkſon*, who was Parſon of *Add-hill* dying, he was preſented to that Parſonage by Eſq; *Arthington* of *Arthington* the Patron, he accepted of it, but enjoyed it but a little ſpace, for Dr. *Hich*, Parſon of *Guiſeley*, challenged it as his by right, upon *King Charles* the Seconds Return, having been excluded by the Act againſt *Pluralities* made by the Parliament; Mr. *Sharp* was capable of it, having been Ordain'd by a Biſhop, yet he ſaw there was no contending with ſo great a Man, eſpecially in that juncture, he was willing to reſign, although Mr. *Arthington* would have tryed his Title to preſent by Law, but he declined it, (for at that time he ſaw a Cloud approaching with covered us all) and ſo retired to his Father's Houſe, where he was

of

of ſingular uſe, living privately, and following his Studies very cloſe, attending upon Publick Ordinances in the Pariſh Church at *Bradford*, where that worthy Perſon Mr. *Abraham Brooksbank* was Vicar till he removed to *Reading*. But when the Licences (granted by *King Charles* 2. in 72.) came forth, he took the opportunity to exerciſe his Miniſtry in his own Houſe, being crowded with great numbers that flock'd to hear him. About that time he married Mrs. *Bagnall*'s Daughter, by whom he had one Daughter, but both dyed. After a ſeaſon he married Mr. *Sales* Daughter, (an excellent *N. C.* Miniſter) by whom he had ſeveral Children, but none are now living, but one Son and one Daughter.

He had a call to Preach at *Morley*, where he was very induſtrious and highly eſteemed. But the Inhabitants of that populous Town of *Leeds* (having built a large Chappel) upon Mr. *Richard Streattons* remove to *London*, gave him a call which he embraced, living at his own Houſe at *Horton*, riding moſtly on *Lords day* Morning to *Leeds*, and back again at Evening (in Summer time at leaſt) which was above a dozen Miles, and Preaching twice, which at length he found too hard for him, therefore

fore he bought a Houſe in *Leeds*, repaired it, built to it, and kept Houſe there and at *Horton* alſo, where his neceſſary affairs requir'd his frequent attendance.

He was in Labours more abundant and ſpared not his own Body or Eſtate, that he might do good to Souls, and edifie the Church of God: He was very ſelf-denying, and ſtood not upon Worldly Incomes, whether they were more or leſs he was very well content, ſo that he gave ſtrict charge to thoſe who collected that ſmall Pittance he accepted of in conſideration of his Labours, not to urge any, but only receive the voluntary Contributions of thoſe who were as well able as willing: He was exceeding Temperate; mortified to all Earthly Enjoyments; of great Æquanimity, Sociable to all, yet prized above all others, ſuch as feared God, theſe were his choſen Companions: He invited Miniſters and Chriſtian Friends frequently to days of Faſting and Prayer in his own Houſe, and went upon a call abroad upon thoſe Occaſions: He was indeed very excellent in Prayer, and had a peculiar way of pleading with God, by ſerious ſenſible Expoſtulations with great Ardency and Affection, which made it appear to Intelligent Chriſtians,

ans, that he was much with God in Prayer, and very familiar with him, few had thoſe rare Gifts, or exerciſed Grace at that rate; and no doubt God dealt familiarly with his Soul; he lived near God, and now is with his God: His Prayers were uſually long but not tedious, being flowered with variety of ſweet Expreſſions, and Pathetical Expoſtulations; and I doubt not but the Lord graciouſly accepted his Perſon, and vouchſafed many gracious Anſwers to his ardent Prayers, as might appear in ſeveral Inſtances, which I forbear to mention.

He was a fluent Preacher, a Maſter of Words, not ſo much abounding in Rhetorical Flouriſhes, as in Pithy and Profitable Sentences, very taking with his Auditors, that ſat under his Miniſtry with great delight: His Sermons were Elaborate and Accurate, all he did was exceeding Polite and Scholar-like; his Method was peculiar to himſelf, and ſometimes Cryptical, but always ſuitable to the matter, and proper to the end deſign'd, not to pleaſe the Fancy, but to inform the Judgment, convince the Conſcience, work upon the Will and Affections, and change the Heart and Life. He hath often ſaid he ſhould never have been ſo cautious, and ſo careful of his Words,

Words, had not his Father been so critical and found so many faults with him, which he studied to rectifie, this did him good, though he found it hard to stoop to, but as he was sensible of his Paternal Authority, and his own Filial Duty; so he was convinc'd of his Fathers judicious Exceptions and the tendency thereof to his own Benefit.

He was very Sound and Orthodox, and trod much in the old Path, though he was well acquainted with the Controversies of the Times, and very able to oppugne Error, and defend the Truth; yet he was of a peaceable Spirit, making the best Constructions of doubtful Phrases, and inclined rather to compose Differences, Civil and Sacred, than to espouse a Party; he was of a Catholick Spirit, and spake well of what was good in Persons that differed from him; he was very unwilling to engage in any Controversie, only some knowing his Acuteness and Genius desired his help in three Cases, first against the *Papists* upon occasion of a young Man turning that way, and sending a Letter to his Relations, which he answered very Learnedly and to great Satisfaction. 2dly. Two Papers he writ in Reply to two Conformists, who grievously and rigidly censured their

their peaceable Brethren, the one in Print, the other in Writing; both which he Answered and Confuted; both well deserved Publishing, but the Times would not then bear it, and now they may seem out of season, but are still preserved as choice Manuscripts in the Hands of Friends: As is also (3dly.) an Answer to some Queries, supposed to be Dr. *Owens*, *Whether Persons who have engaged unto Reformation, and another way of Divine Worship, according to the Word of God*, &c. *may lawfully go unto and attend on the use of the* Common Prayer *in Divine Worship*, &c.?

He had a lofty Poetical Strain, wherein he sometimes (for a diversion) employed himself upon special Occasions, as upon the Death of that Worthy Grave Divine Mr. *Elkanah Wales*, and upon the Burning of *London* in 1666. which being show'd to Dr. *Robert Wild*, he seem'd surpriz'd, and ingenuously acknowledg'd, *that Man should be his Master, he would yeild the Laurel to the North Country Poet.* An imperfect Copy of his *Verses* for and against *Sleep* (made in his younger Years, when at the University) were Printed under the Name of the Famous *Cleveland*; several other of his *Poems*, deservedly valuable, remain in the Custody of some Friends.

He had a copious Library, and abundance of the chocieſt Books, of which he made good uſe, having a notable facility in turning over *Authors*, and picking the Quinteſſence out of them.

He would never be perſwaded to put any thing to the Preſs, though often ſolicited to Print ſomething, but reply'd there were Books enough Printed: But a Gentlewoman in the Neighbourhood being in great trouble of Conſcience, often came to viſit him; whilſt he diſcours'd with her, ſhe ſeem'd to be much ſatisfied, and her Spirit appeaſed, but when ſhe was gone from him ſhe was as much caſt down and diſconſolate as ever; whereupon ſhe earneſtly deſired him to write down ſome Pertinent Meditations, that ſhe might have recourſe to, when ſhe was abſent from him; which he did, and gives ſome account of in his Epiſtle to the Reader, perfixed before this enſuing Treatiſe, yet could not be perſwaded to let it ſee the Light while he lived, yet ſhewed ſome willingneſs it ſhould be Printed after his deceaſe, having before writ it out by his own Hand in readineſs for the Preſs, and deſign'd for Publick Good; which upon the Importunity and Encouragement of ſeveral Friends is now accompliſh'd

pliſh'd by his ſurviving Widow, that all the Voluminous Labours of ſuch a wiſe Maſter-builder might not be loſt, ſince moſt of his Writings for his own uſe were in Short-hand, and not fully Legible or Intelligible by any, there being many unknown Characters of his own inventing interſperſed.

But to come to the laſt Scene of this worthy Man's Life: He had endured the acute pains of the Pleuriſie four ſeveral times, yet through the Bleſſing of God as often recovered out of it, though upon frequent occaſions complaining of a pain in his ſide, yet by Temperance and the uſe of Means, he was wonderfully ſhored up in the midſt of his Travels, Studies, and Preachings.

*Auguſt* the 4*th.* 1693. he rid from his own Houſe at *Horton* to *Leeds*, being as well as ordinarily, in competent Health, Preached that day, being *Friday*, the Preparation Sermon for the *Lord's Supper*: *Lord's-day Auguſt* the 6*th.* he Preached twice. Adminiſtred the *Lord's Supper*, was wonderfully enlarged both in Expreſſions and warm Affections, ſo that ſome were ready to think he was in Heaven already, and

admired the Grace of God in him.

*Wednesday*, *August* 9*th*. was the Monthly Publick Fast, he was long at Work, spent himself exceedingly: On *Thursday* Night he begun of his old Distemper the Pleurisie, which now made the fifth vigorous Assault; he was by the Physicians advice Blooded twice, but his Distemper prevailed, and turned rather to a Fever, yet still the violent Pain in his side continued, but he was very sensible and patient under it: *August* 24*th*. he desired the assistance of a Friend in drawing his Will, which he Subscribed the 26*th*. after that he made a most Pathetical affecting Exhortation to several Christian Friends then present, who observed that the Graces of Faith and Humility, which had been eminent throughout the whole course of his Life did grow and encrease to the very last; he was nothing in his own Eyes, had the most self-debasing Expressions imaginable; "Poor "Creature, sinful Worm, vile Wretch, that "had intruded into the high calling of the "Ministry, and had no Gifts, no Graces, "no Abilities, to discharge such a Trust. He even loathed himself for it, and if the Great God should spurn him out of his Presence he could not but justifie him: "Oh!

"Oh! wo is me that I have ſinned, I even "tremble to appear before the dreadful "Tribunal of God, who will come with "flaming Fire to take vengeance on them "that know not God, and obey not the "Goſpel of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. Remem- "ber what I Preach'd to you from that "Text; I have endeavour'd to diſcharge "a good Conſcience, though with a mul- "titude of Imperfections, and have not "ſhunned to declare unto you the whole "Counſel of God, and I bleſs God for the "ſweet Communion I have had with you "in his Ordinances, and humbly beſeech "him to ſupply the breach that is ſhortly "to be made, and to ſend you a Man of "Judgment, fitted with his Spirit, that "may better diſcharge his Duty than I "have done, who deſerve to be made a "Spectacle of Miſery to Angels and Men; "But bleſſed be God for hopes of Salvati- "on through the Bleſſed Mediator *Jeſus* "*Chriſt*. Oh the infinite Riches of free "Grace! And here he fell into an holy extaſie of Joy, but the Expreſſions cannot be retriev'd, thoſe who were preſent being too deeply Affected to take the Particulars in Writing or Memory. Several In- ſtructions likewiſe he gave to his Relati- ons. The Night after he grew very weak

and

and his Vital Spirits decay'd more and more, till the next Morning about Seven of the Clock, having taken a ſolemn leave of his dear Wife and Children, and with great Faith and Chearfulneſs recommended his Soul into the Hands of his dear Redeemer, he encountred the Pangs of Death *Auguſt* the 27*th*. 1693. being *Lord's-day*, and entred upon his Everlaſting Reſt, being aged Sixty Years.

On *Tueſday Auguſt* the 29*th*. he was Buried, many ſad and ſorrowful Hearts, both of Miniſters and Chriſtian Friends attending the Funeral. His Corpſe was ſolemnly Interred in the Chancel of the New Church in *Leeds*, nigh the Remains of good Mr. *Wales*, as himſelf had deſired.

*September* the 6*th*. 1693. upon the Peoples requeſt, two of his Brethren Preached Funeral Sermons at his Meeting-place on *Mill-Hill*, to a mighty concourſe of People, the one treating upon *Acts* 20.38. *Sorrowing moſt of all for the Words which he ſpake that they ſhould ſee his Face no more*. The other treated upon that Text, 1 *Kings* 13.30. *And he laid his Carkaſe in his own Grave, and they mourned over him, ſaying, alas my Brother!*

Thus

Thus dyed this holy Man of God, that hath left few behind him of the ſame Spirit, a Dutiful Child to his godly Parents, a Loving Husband to his lovely Wife, an Indulgent Father to his hopeful Children, a Faithful Friend to all that feared God, a Conſciencious, Laborious Miniſter, and Tender-hearted Watchman over the Souls of his Flock. A Perſon of great worth in all Men's account but his own; indeed it was ſtrange to ſee a Man of ſuch eminent Parts, and rare, and raiſed Accompliſhments, to have ſo mean an eſteem of himſelf; he thought himſelf below others, though he was higher by Head and Shoulders than moſt of his Brethren: He was cloathed with Humility, this was the upper Garment, put upon all his other Graces, and was his braveſt Ornament, which rendred him Conſpicuous in the Eyes of all that knew him: Though much more might be ſaid of him, yet let his own Works Praiſe him in the Gates, and let us all make ſure of our State, and make haſt after him to that Land of Light, that New *Jeruſalem.*

It cannot be expected that a Compleat Draught of this worthy Man's Life ſhould be drawn by any Pencil but his own.

May

May these hints of so rare a Patern of Piety, have influence upon his surviving Relations and Hearers, to transform them into the same Image, that this Legacy of so Rational a Discourse, may have a persuasive Power to attract Souls to a Capacity for Divine Consolations; and such a real Example have a compulsive Power to draw many to follow this *Heroe* and others into *Eternal Mansions*; if both do not effect these Ends, the Spectator and Reader have more to Answer for.

---

## *ERRATA.*

PAge 2. line 24. read *new Series*, l. 32. *r a Prolepsis*. p. 3. l. 1, r. *our collapsed*. p. 4. l. 14. blot out *in*. p. 5. l. 28. r. (*interline.*) p. 6. l. 24. r. *my Troublers*. p. 8. l. 33. r. *Tormenters*. p. 21. l. 11. r. *the Pharisees*. p. 38. l. 17. r. *this Nation*. p. 40. l. 15. r. *together with it*. p. 63. l. 10. r. *another*. l. 32. r. *mediately*. p. 73. l. 21. r. *born, and live, and act*. p. 80. l. 10. f. *ear*, r. *care*. p. 83. l. 29. r. *the Ministry*. p. 87. l. 26. r. *intensum*. p. 111. l. 34. r. *good life*. p. 123. l. 3. r. *undiversedly*. p. 124. l. 6. the Parenthesis ends with *do*. p. 125. l. 30. r. *Image*. p. 136. l. 30. r. *a more ready*. p. 142. l. 16. r. *of God*. p. 143. l. 13. blot out the second *and*. l. 21. f. *the*, r. *this*. p. 144. l. 13. r. *express*. p. 158. l. 25. r. *his*. p. 160. l. 1. r. *own*. p. 162. l. 26. r. *unsupportable*. p. 165. l. 2. r. *and Potency*. l. 33. r. *own*. p. 186. l. 3. r. *whatever*. p. 198. l. 21. r. *enjoy'd*. p. 205. l. 21. blot out *as*. p. 208. l. 33. r. *more*. p. 214. l. 33. r. *he*. p. 215. l. 24. r. *Thought*. l. 32. r. *summ*. p. 217. l. 16. r. *heightned or transfer'd*. p. 237. l. 9. r. *these*. p. 240. l. 5. r. *combines*. p. 242. l. 22. r. *in Wisdom*. p. 245. l. 2. r. *and in all* l. 25. blot out *in*. p. 248. l. 7. r. *true Comforts*. p. 250. l. 14. r. 9. p. 258. l. 28 r. *might hence derive*. p. 260. l. 26. r. *in secency*. l. 35, 36. *make a comma* before *from* and after *which*. p. 280 l. 36. insert *an* Interpreter, and r. *shew me*. p. 285. l. 13. blot out 30. p. 303. l. 20. blot out 4. p. 307. l. 17. r. *stere*. l. 31. r. *that Person*. p. 318. l. 23. r. *if*. l. 36. blot out *that*. p. 361. l. 4. r. *they*.

THE

# THE

# *Nature, Origin, Subject-Matter, Character, Method, and Means of*

# COMFORT.

## CHAP. I.

### The Introduction, with the Explication of the Words, and their Sense Critical and Moral.

PSAL. XCIV. 19.

*In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.*

*LORD, I am Hell, but thou art Heaven*, was the pathetick Exclamation of the Spirit of Martyrdom in a devout Soul. Here you have a prospect of both. Tormenting Thoughts are the veriest Fiends, nothing can make us miserable without them; nor in the enjoyment of the sweet Delectation of those divine desirable Joys, which are most suitable and proper to rational Nature, and the appetite of an immortal Spirit. The former are our natural Inheritance, these the free Donations of infinite

Bp *Hooper.*

Goodneſs, or the unmerited communications of Fidelity and Righteouſneſs. By our Apoſtacy from God, we rendered our ſelves inſufficient to attain that Felicity, which our innocent Eſtate did entitle us unto, and poſſeſs no ſufficiency to any thing but the making our ſelves the moſt wretched of the whole Creation, and are relievable by nothing but the All-ſufficiency of Heaven. The inanimate Creatures may indeed be diſpoſſeſt of their Heaven, *viz.* their Centre and Reſt; but the Evil thereof they can neither fear nor feel. Vegetables may live in a Hell through the burning Fever of a Summer's drought, but cannot ſmart and be in pain. Senſitive Natures may be farther diveſted of their Happineſs, be driven out of their Paradiſe in *Gilead* and *Baſhan*, and be yet more miſerable under the Servitude of that torturing Devil, the Luſt of degenerate man; but a final period is put to all their Infelicities by that, which (if infinite Grace prevent not) will be only the beginning of our remedileſs Woe; at the worſt they can but die, and 'tis without the ſting of a cruciating Fear, that a Life without end, after Death will introduce a Series of never-ending Plagues. But Immortality, the higheſt Prerogative of humane Nature, is through Sin become its moſt diſmal cauſe of horrour, and in being better than the reſt of the inferiour Creation, we through our own default are only render'd capable of being worſe, both in another, and even in this preſent life, as far as our dreadful Expectations become a prolepſis or pre-occupation of thoſe Sufferings, which are no leſs durable than intolerable. Neither can we be eas'd by the hopes, that the leaſt part or degree hereof is avoidable through the efficacy of our home-bred endowments, or any thing we

1 *Joh.* 1. 9.

we can ſcrape out of the rubbiſh of collapſed Natures, ſince by experience we find, that our greateſt preventive care is not able totally to exclude and keep down thoſe prepoſſeſſing horrible anticipations; nor the Furniture we are enrich'd with, of power to ſupport and eaſe our minds under (much leſs to antidote) thoſe real Plagues, which actually infeſt, and ſink us towards a State much more inſupportable, our hope and help muſt needs therefore periſh from within, our relief is wholly from without; yet not from Earth, but Heaven. There's no Malady ſo perplexing, ſo dangerous, but there's a ſufficient and ſuitable Remedy in God.

In *Bedlam* I have ſeen a Man under the Severity of that moſt rigid and moſt uncomfortable Confinement, ſo not only unconcern'd but triumphant, as to bear up himſelf in the Port and Majeſty of a King, and in his imaginary height and glory, with a diſdainful ſtatelineſs, converſe with thoſe little ſhreds of Mortality who were bleſt, as he thought, in the Honour of his Empire and Government; and ſometimes with a ſtately humbleneſs invite them to glory in his Condeſcenſions; with ſuch a creative power is Fancy endow'd, that it can produce almoſt any thing out of nothing, dwindle ſubſtantial Woes into Shadows, convert a Hell into an *Elyſium.* Of ſuch Madmen the World is full: We (as the Priſoners of Juſtice) carry our Chains about with us, and they ſit and ſink into our Fleſh, yea, our very bones; yet, as if we poſſeſt an unconfinable liberty, we jovially dance about, and ſolace our ſelves with this lamentable dream, till our real Miſeries confute our falſe Imaginations. For a Man's ſtate may be miſerable, yet the Man ſo rationally, ſtoically, or brutiſhly mad, as not to be miſerable: That is, ſince nothing can make a Man

unhappy but by the mediation of ſomething within him, his Fancy, his Folly, his Fears, his Feeling, his Reaſonable Powers; hence that which a Man either is above the ſence of, or hath no ſenſe of, is to him as if it were not, though never ſo real in it ſelf: Therefore the Venom and Sting of Infelicity is our Senſe, and the Gall and Bitterneſs of our Senſe lies in our Thoughts, the workings of our Minds. A Man that lies aſleep bound hand and foot upon the top of a Precipice, with his Head, and a great part of his Body hanging over a bottomleſs Gulf, is in a caſe moſt wretched in it ſelf, the leaſt hitch tumbles him down into remedileſs Ruine; yet in the condition he is in, *viz.* Sleeping, he is aware of no danger, to him all's well and ſecure, he has no apprehenſions except of Eaſe, Safety, and Reſt. But awake him that he look about, ſee feel, and think of his Peril and Helpleſsneſs, then will he be all Agony and Horror, ready to ſwoon and die through the direful Apprehenſions of his (as to himſelf) irremediable Death. This is our Caſe, we are naturally aſleep in Security and Iniquity; upon the brinks of Hell, bound hand and foot in the Chains of our Sins, and an Adverſary, Satan, at hand, to puſh us headlong into the Abyſs of Miſery. Beſide, the Omnipotent Vengeance of Heaven awaits us ready to arraign, condemn, and execute us, to which we even dare it every moment. But being aſleep (nay, dead, *Eph.* 2. 1.) we feel nothing; reckleſs and careleſs, in a *Bedlam* Dream, we conceit that we ſwim upon a ſmooth and Halcyon Sea of ſenſual Joys, as if 'twere a Voyage to Paradiſe, 'till God awake us by the Calls and Convictions of his Word and Spirit; but then, Oh, the inexpreſſible Troubles, Terrors and Aſtoniſhment that arreſt us! becauſe our amazing Jeopardy, whereof we had

had no apprehenſions before, is now entertain'd into our Thoughts, and works ſo much the more violently there, by how much we find our ſelves the more helpleſs, and therefore hopeleſs. Thus, whatever perplexes us does it by way of Thoughts, as it inveſts our Mind and Conſideration, it tortures us. 'Till it thus get within us, and engage our conſidering Faculties, it does not ordinarily commit a Rape upon our Iraſcible, or Interrupt the Sweet and Peace of a ſecure and quiet Compoſure and Reſt. But when this Tempeſt, this Hurricane of Thoughts beats upon us, we cannot tell which way to turn, how to bear up againſt it. It confounds our Reaſon, diſcompoſes our Affections, terrifies our Conſciences, tears down all our Confidences, reduces us to an abſolute *Nonplus*. Our Thoughts trouble us (as *Dan.* 4. 19.) even to aſtoniſhment, and ſo much the more, by how many the more they are. *Multitudes* of Thoughts beget multitudes of Cares and Fears, and Griefs and Cumbers, and Diſquiets and Deſpondencies; and of theſe ſo many the more, by how much the more intimate and deep within, and by how much the more they are our own, not of a divine Injection, but a corrupt Mind's Fabrication.

*In the multitude of my thoughts within in me, in intimo meo* [inteſtin] *in my Heart* [*Septuagint & Vulgar Lat.*] expreſſing the general ſenſe of the Original Word, by the nobleſt part within, to which the Scripture ſometimes attributes Thoughts, as *Gen.* 6. 5, *&c.* Both in conjunction amount to [*my inmoſt Heart or Soul*] If they be Thoughts, not meerly the workings of my ſenſitive Powers inward or outward, my Follies or Fancies; but the mature and genuine off-ſpring of my Mind. If they

be not a few ſtragglers whereof I can ſay, *apparent raræ nantes in gurgite vaſto*, that they ſwim only here and there thinly in the vaſt Ocean of my Underſtanding, but cover the face of my Soul in *Multitudes*. If they be only *my Thoughts*, ſuch as ſpring in my own Garden, having no Author but my ſelf, no Original but in and from my ſelf, whatever their object be, whether that which I feel in my own Breſt, or that which is an effect of the ſame cauſe in others, which has ſuch a diſmal aſpect upon me, even Sin. And if they be penetrating Thoughts, that ſink and ſoak into the bottom, and become moſt *intimate* within me, not lying ſhallow upon the ſurface of my Soul; *In ſuch multitudes of my thoughts within me*, I cannot find the leaſt glimmering of Comfort at home, nothing but Terror and Deſpair; conſtrain'd am I therefore to look abroad, and no where can I enjoy any thing reviving, but in thee. *O Lord*, the *Comforts* which refreſh me muſt be *thine*, or none. And ſince nothing can paſs into my Soul, but at the door of Thoughts, even theſe thy Comforts cannot affect me, but as Troubles do, they muſt enter into my Thoughts too, be apprehended by my Mind, ere they can relieve my Heart. The ſame Engine that introduced my Miſery, muſt uſher in my Mercy. I muſt be cured through the ſame Weapon that wounded me. *Thoughts*, the firſt born of my Soul, muſt bear my Comforts that heal me; the healing is not from any vertue in the Weapon, but thy *Comforts*, the Salve upon it. *My Soul* by its Thoughts viewing thy *Comforts* and tranſmitting them to my Affections is in a tranſport of delight and joy.

Refer to the 1. Direction.

The Word rendered *Thoughts* is but twice found in Scripture. Interpreters judge from the affinity

of

of it with other Words of the same sound and almost the same Letters, that it carries an allusion to the Boughs of a Tree. *Such Thoughts* then are here to be understood, which in like manner proceeding from the Mind of Man spread every way, and divide into smaller Branches, and the smallest Twigs, so entangling themselves together as upon every motion to wound each other, and the Tree they spring from. Therefore the *Seventy* render the Word by ὀδυνῶν, which signifies the Pangs of of a Woman in Travail. *In the fulness of the pangs of my Heart*, &c. Others render it *Perplexities, entangled Thoughts*, &c.

Neither does the *English* fully express the sence of the other Word translated *Delight*, which primarily signifies to *look upon*. The Mood 'tis here used in imports a looking upon with Pleasure, Content, Love, Complacency, even as *Lovers* look upon one another, ('tis Dr. *Hammonds*'s Paraphrase) with a sweet and amiable Regard, with loving and lovely glances of Favour and good will. The Original does not intimate so much the Act as the Power and Possibility of delighting; not that the Psalmist did actually lay hold upon, embrace, and apply to himself, but only that those Comforts of God did rather manifest a forwardness, and favorable readiness, to lay hold upon him; they were not already apprehended by him, but offered themselves to him, lay plain and fair before him, inviting him by their benign and amiable looks, by their goodness, and sweetness, and suitableness to close with, and espouse them. Even then when we are so overwhelmed with Perplexities, and Troubles that we do not, or will not, or cannot, or dare not appropriate divine Comforts to our selves; they notwithstanding are prepared for

us, and by their lovely looks, and endearing amiableneſs woo us to entertain them.

The ſence therefore of the Verſe is,

In the throng and croud of a numberleſs fulneſs, (that I may include the *Greek*) of my troubleſome, perplexing, diſquieting, paining Thoughts, in my inmoſt Soul, thy Comforts have a favourable aſpect upon me.

This, though a ſingular, yet conſidering that the Scripture is a Catholiq; Rule of univerſal concernment, and deſcribes Caſes, rather than Perſons; and oft in this Book of *Pſalms* ſpeaks of the whole Church, under the notion of a ſingle Perſon, as *Pſal.* 45. *Daughter*, &c. I ſhall therefore convert into a general Propoſition though in terms a little differing.

*That God in the tendereſt affection, has prepared for and offers to his Church in General, and all its true Members in Particular, the ſweeteſt Comforts, in their ſoreſt Perplexities.* Whilſt our Hearts are brim full of trouble his Heart is full of compaſſion to us; and ready to adminiſter the moſt ſuitable and ſatisfactory Conſolations, when our Thoughts hurry us into Confuſion. There is that in God's Nature and Word, tendering it ſelf to our acceptance and embracement, which may abundantly ſolace us in the ſevereſt Calamities. Though the World have never ſo malign an aſpect upon us, yet we have very favourable Heavens, which by their benign Influences will revive us, when there's a combination of all below to blaſt us. Every good Soul, when under the bettereſt preſſures, through its own ungovernable cogitations, which are of all torments the neareſt, and moſt unavoidable, may find not only the ſupports of everlaſting Arms, but the communications of infinite Love, Goodneſs, and Peace,

Peace, with concurrent united Energy and Vertue relieving it under all its saddest despondencies, and by making the joy of the Lord its strength, contributing to lighten its Burthen and sweeten its Sorrows. You and I, if our Hearts be right with God, may in our deepest Agonies, sing with the Psalmist, *In the multitude*, &c.

## CHAP. II.

### *The Subject of Comfort display'd under the Psalmist's Character.*

BUT that we may not miss the tune and harmonize with Satan, by cheating our selves into endless discomfort, under a mistaking application of comfort, instead of making melody to the Lord in Hearts repleni[illegible]hed with Celestial Joys, let us endeavour a clear and distinct apprehension of three things.

1. *Whether we be such Persons as the Psalmist.*
2. *Whether the constitution of our Thoughts, and*
3. *The complexion of our Comforts be alike.*

To administer some assistance to your Meditations in all these I undertake 3. things,

1. To give the Character of the Psalmist, and by consequence of the Person who may find such relief from the Comforts of God in the midst of all inward Perturbations.

2. To describe the nature and quality of those Thoughts, the multitude whereof did so discompose him, and may us, that no redress can be found on this side Heaven.

3. To particularize those Comforts which are of such a reviving quality, deriving them from their proper Source and Fountain.

1. The

1. The Character and Circumstances of the Person is necessary to be premised, that we may not build without Foundation. 'Tis certain that the sweet of comfort is a temptation to every Man to claim and apply it, yet no less certain, that 'tis not the right and portion of every Man, (of what temper of Soul soever) who will be bold to commit this Sacrilege. God reserves these Pearls for his Cabinet, he does not cast them regardlessly before Dogs and Swine.

But now the Personal Character of the Penman of this Psalm, I cannot give except I could certainly find who it was. The Rabbins have a Rule (I will not avouch its truth) that when a Psalm (as this) has no Title, he is to be accounted the Composer who is named last, in some Title of the preceeding: This would refer us to *Moses*, *Ps.* 90. but *Ps.* 92. (by several circumstances) points at a later Author; therefore puts in an exception to the Rule. For not to insist upon the Title in the *Greek* which ascribes it to *David*; nor the mention of Musical Instruments ver. 3. which were little used in the Wilderness, or until *David*'s time; the exalting the Horn, and anointing with fresh Oyl, *ver.* 10. seem to intimate something of Regality, in hopes at least, and his Eye seeing his desire upon his Enemies, *ver.* 11. all which are Phrases used in other Psalms, whose compiler is known; besides the naming of the *House of God*, *and his Courts*, *ver.* 13. and *Ps.* 93. 5. seem to respect a later Age. And the Genius of this whole 94. *Ps.* especially *ver.* 5, 6, 15, 16, 20, 21. cast it lower than the time of *Moses*. It was the composure of a Person so considerable, as to be the object of a King's Enmity, and that King an *Israelite*, as may appear by comparing *ver.* 10. and 20. *He that chastizeth the Heathen*

*then shall he not correct*? whom? surely some contradistinct People, and which can that be if not *Israel*? wherein there was a *Throne*, *ver.* 20. which persecuted the Psalmist, *ver.* 21, 22. no obscure evidence that the Person was *David*; the time, his Affliction under *Saul*, and there's nothing in the Psalm but may easily be reconcil'd to this opinion, were it material to spend time about it. 'Tis undoubtedly sure from Divine Testimony, *Heb.* 4. 7. that the next *Psal.* 95. is *David's*, and the *Septuagint* entitles him to this also, therefore I shall, upon occasion, take it for granted that he was the Author.

But that which is of more concern to us, is the *Moral* Character of the *Psalmist*, which as in a Glass is represented to us in, and we may gather from the scope of the Psalm, and the sence of the 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22. *verses*.

1. He was a Man that liv'd under a due and deep sense of God, as the whole Psalm, but especially *ver.* 8, 9, 10, 11. demonstrate; where he undertakes to convince the secure, careless, presumptuous wicked ones of *Israel*,

1. That there is a God, of a boundless Understanding, as knowing intimately and perfectly,

1. The very thoughts of the Heart, *ver.* 10, 11. *He that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall he not know*? *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Man, that they are Vanity.*

2. The Words of the Tongue, *ver.* 9. *He that planted the Ear shall not he hear*? Words are an Object of hearing.

3. The Works of the Hands, *ver.* 9. *He that formed the Eye, shall not he see*? Deeds are a proper Object of seeing.

2. That

2. That this God is of ſtrict and ſevere Juſtice, *ver.* 1, 2, 23. *Vengeance* belongs to him as Judge of the Earth; and *ver.* 10. *He that chaſtizeth the Heathen, ſhall not he correct?* Whom? you his own by Calling and Profeſſion, if you be not alſo his in *Conſcience* and *Converſation*. Nay, ſays he, 'tis a *Bleſſed* thing to be corrected, if together therewith the *Lord* ſuperadd *Inſtruction*, *ver.* 12. The *Iſſue* will be good though the *Paſſion* be grievous; which yet to Gods Servants will be ſhort, for all 'tis eternal to the Wicked, *ver.* 13.

3. That this God is of unchangeable *Love* to his own, and will evidence it in their Deliverance and Advancement, and alſo by his Preſence with them, and care of them and kindneſs to them, ſo as never to relinquiſh and reject them, *ver.* 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21.

Now he that undertakes to inſtruct others in ſuch *Doctrines*, either maintains in his own Soul a commanding ſenſe thereof, or he is a *Hypocrite*, which to imagine concerning a divinely inſpired Penman of Holy Writ, is not only uncharitable but impious.

If then we entertain no reverent, and awful Apprehenſions of the *Divine Majeſty*, or if our Conceptions of God do not make an indelible Impreſſion upon our hearts, to over-rule them into a religious Care, that our Actions may be a clear repreſentation to others of our inward Sentiments, concerning the Glory and Excellency of God: If we pretend God and Heaven, and yet like Fiends or Swine, live in a Sink or Hell of Ungodlineſs, Unrighteouſneſs, Inſobriety, 'tis ſelf-deluding, damnable Preſumption, to intermeddle with, and appropriate to our ſelves any divine Conſolations out of the Covenant and Promiſes. This Holy Man preſents theſe adorable Perfections of God

to

to the Minds and Conſideration of theſe wicked ones, on purpoſe to reſtrain their hands, and bridle their very inward Imaginations of Evil againſt his Inheritance, that a venerable Opinion of his Omniſcience and Juſtice might not remain meerly as a barren Speculation in their Underſtandings, but overcome their Wills and Affections, and govern their external Actions, as no doubt they did his own; and if they do not ours, if the awful Excellencies of God do not affect us, what have we to do to refreſh our ſelves with the comfortable? God will not be divided, cannot. If his infinite Majeſty do not get the Victory over our Iraſcibles, our Concupiſcibles muſt not, cannot be ſatiated with his fathomleſs Mercy. He will come in Lightning and Thunder, ere he diſtil upon us in a gentle ſhower of Love and Peace. He that will not retain a powerful Sence of God's Greatneſs, neither ſhall, nor indeed will entertain a reviving ſenſe of his Goodneſs. If Thoughts of God will not work one way, they will not another. That Man's Comforts are none of God's, which are not uſher'd in by the Fear of God; neither has he any Right to receive Good from any thing of God, who is not wrought and formed into Goodneſs by All of him; God will be all or nothing; command down our Corruptions by the dread of his Power, or he will not command up our Content by the diſplay of his Kindneſs; if he cannot bend us, he will break us. The ſenſe of his Glory muſt make us better, or the ſenſe of his Bounty muſt not make our burthen lighter. In ſum, Greatneſs muſt awe us, or Goodneſs ſhall not eaſe us; no ſenſe of God can do us good that is not univerſal. No Promiſes comfort, independently upon the Precepts. We ſteal our Peace, if Grace give it not. And holy Senſations

of

of the plenitude of all heart and life-ruling Excellencies in God, are the very first Principles and beginnings of Grace. If a Man can think of God, and yet love his Lusts, his entry upon the Inheritance of Peace is a bold and impudent Usurpation. *Ps.* 50. 18. *Unto the Wicked, God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest Instruction, and castest my Words behind thee,* &c. The Origin of this, both Presumption and Disobedience, is declar'd, *ver.* 21. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self:* Low, creeping, ineffectual Thoughts of God, which will permit Men to be unlike God, will also suffer them to delude themselves into real Woe, by invading his Comforts without the Warrant of his Commands. He that hath a Right to solace himself in God, or any thing of his, must in his proportion be like God. 'Tis in virtue of his infinite Perfection, that he is infinitely pleased with himself; if we possess nothing of the one, both as a foreign Good, and domestick personal Qualification, what have we to do with the other? If the Perfections of God be not our objective chief Happiness without us; if they be not a transforming Principle and Life within us, as far as communicable, they cannot be our Formal chief Good and Happiness: If they be not our Right and Nature, they cannot be our Pleasure. There can be no Satisfaction whilst there is Dissimilitude, Dissension, Opposition of Natures. What Comfort can Enemies have one in another? A harmony of Dispositions must introduce Complacency; where this is not, there's no Content. All that solaces, must be suitable. Pleasure and Delight arise from the agreeableness of Objects and Appetites. What pleases not,

not, comforts not. God himſelf, who is an everlaſting Fullneſs and Fountain of the ſweeteſt and richeſt Satisfactions, cannot be a comfort to that Soul, which is not pleaſed with him; and then nothing in the World can; it being impoſſible that finite ſhould outdo infinite. But how can that Man be pleaſed with God, that does not apprehend his ſingularly delectable Excellencies, or apprehending them, does not by conſideration work a due reſpect to them into his inmoſt Soul, ſo as out of Conſcience, with a liberal and ingennous Affection, to approve of, and chuſe, and acquieſce in God, as his All-ſufficient Portion, his ſole and ſupreme Felicity? Really if we think that we can be, and enjoy better any where elſe than in God, or if that be the import of our Actions, we neither can nor will poſſeſs a Heaven of Conſolation in God. For that only is our ultimate Comfort, which is our beſt, and if we do but make God a means to a further end, he cannot be our reſt. Here then muſt we fix our Tabernacles for a final repoſe and content; therefore muſt keep alive, and lively in our Minds and Hearts the Thoughts of God. He that can live a day without ſome pleaſing Reflections upon immenſe Wiſdom, Power, Holineſs, Juſtice, Goodneſs, Faithfulneſs, All-ſufficiency, *&c.* may be a Devil tomorrow, as he is a Beaſt to day; but Title has he none whilſt thus brutiſh, to refreſh himſelf with the Comforts of Heaven, ſince he owns not the Well-ſpring of them. Oh, let us ſet the Lord always before our eyes, and keep him in view as the Omniſcient Superviſor of our hearts and ways, having always an eye within us, piercing into the moſt ſecret receſſes of our Souls. Let only a *Balaam* ſay in the future, *I ſhall behold him, but not near*; do thou,

thou, O my Soul, awe thy self into seriousness, and Integrity of Conscience, by present Consideration, that this all-comprehending, unconfinable Nature, is necessarily more nigh to, and intimately present with thee, than any thing in the World, thine own Body, nay, thy very Thoughts, and most inward Motions not excepted. Thou understandest that he is the highest Perfection, and plenitude of Essence, Existence, Substance, Glory; that more of God is every where, than of any thing; that there is not so much Soul in a body, Light in the Sun, Matter in the Universe, as there is of God in each; that they are not, as he is. They are but derivative Beings of a thin, lank Constitution, in comparison of that amplitude and fullness of Being in God, who is every thing in the utmost Perfection, that he can possible be, from Eternity to Eternity unalterable, and every where the same boundless Perfection, that he is any where. And wilt thou dare to be, or speak, or do any thing unbecoming so august, so awful, so glorious a Presence. Shall the eye of a Worm, *Job* 25. 6. give Law to thy Tongue and Hands, and shall not the Sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth have an Empire in thy Conscience? Oh, do not dare to be other now, than at Judgment thou wilt wish thou hadst been: For thy Judge is no less present, although thou be less sensible. Enforce upon thy self, nay, rather with a spontaneous and generous Freedom of Spirit, out of choice entertain, and take complacency in such Considerations alway, as may better thee, because not to be better for them is to be worse; ineffectual Thoughts of God being like to be effectual for thy confusion. If the Rays of Divine Glory that shine into thy reasoning Powers, have no influence upon thy Appetite and Actions;

Actions; if notwithstanding them, thou can'st be as vain, frothy, carnal, secure, rocky, unsavoury, unbelieving, formal, hypocritical, worldly, lustful, lazy, disobedient, as if thou didst still sit in darkness and the shadow of Death; if thy apprehensions of the super-intendency of Heaven do not over-awe thy unruly untoward Will, into compliance with that Will which is supreme and universal Goodness, do not quicken thee to Penitence and Holiness; to an intire and upright observance of the whole Condition of the Covenant of Grace, with a persevering resolution and endeavour, thou wilt certainly find, Oh my Soul, that this Light will be mighty to aggravate thy Sin, and Punishment everlastingly. Oh, for a heart so to work toward God, under its Sensations of the Unfathomableness of his Understanding, Universalness of his Presence, Particularity of his Observance, Amplitude of his Goodness, Beauty of his Holiness, Severity and Impartiality of his Justice, Extensiveness of his Power; in fine, Greatness and Incomprehensibleness of his Majesty and Glory, as to be altogether unsatisfiable, till it can centre it self upon him, as its only Happiness in an absolute Renunciation of every thing, that stands in competition with him, and be willing out of love to him readily to embrace his Laws, submit to the Government of his Son Jesus Christ, and the Conduct of his Spirit of Truth and Grace; which if these Thoughts of God will not prevail upon thee to do, nothing can, since there is infinitely less of Argument in every finite thing, nay, in all together, than there is in the Infiniteness of God. Wilt thou hence then be perswaded, Oh, my Soul, to acknowledge that God in all thy ways,

κίνησον κίνησιν συνάπλεον.

whom thus thou knowst in some degree, though but very imperfect? Wilt thou fear and reverence his Greatness, love and delight in his Goodness, conform to his Holiness, stand in awe of his Justice, in all things subjugate and submit thy self to his Soveraign Authority and Will as the best and wisest? Thine own interest as well as the reason of the thing, and the command of thy Maker requires thy speedy and thorow resolution. If thou wilt not bid an everlasting adieu to all the Comforts of Heaven, thou must thus humbly seek after them, which if thou do really, 'tis no presumption to claim them as thine Eternal Inheritance and Portion. This appertains to the First Commandment, we shall derive another part of the Psalmist's Character from the Second.

## CHAP. III.

*A Second Character of the Subject of Comfort*, Prayer.

2. THe Sacred Penman here was a Man of *Prayer*, the whole Psalm is a solemn Address to God; and 'tis not like the fumbling of one unaccustomed thus to converse with the Divine Majesty; the Genius of it gives abundant evidence that it hath been a familiar and frequent practice with such gravity of Expression, with such liberty of Spirit, with such a holy Parrhesy and Confidence, with such variety of Arguments, with such endearments of affection does he plead with God, as one that long had liv'd upon the trade, and was a good Proficient in this heavenly art of Wrestling with God. And indeed 'tis generally under this Duty, that the Lord administers the solace and satisfaction

satisfaction of his Love to revive a drooping Heart. Whoever is unacquainted with Prayer, is utterly an alien from Divine Peace. Those that live most with God in this exercise, receive most from God, enjoy most in him, to sweeten their Spirits, under all their Sorrows; his Promise engaging him to be found in a way of Peace and Contentation, of all those that diligently seek him. Beside that his own Glory engages him to answer the Petitions of Peace which are put up in the Name, and put into the Hands of his only Begotten, to be presented to his Majesty, perfumed with the Incense of his Mediation, *Joh.* 14. 13. *Whatever ye shall ask in my Name that will I do.* Wherefore? is it because you ask, or for the merit of your Devotions, or the strength of your Faith, or the fervency of of your Spirits, or the forcibleness of your Arguments, or the urgency of your Importunities, &c.? *No, but I will do it that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* Oh gracious Redeemer! Oh precious Promise! Oh blessed Hope! How strong and rich are thy Consolations? especially considering the relation which this Promise stands in to another immediately succeeding it, *viz.* that of a *Comforter*, the Holy Spirit, which our blessed Mediator prevail'd with his Father to bestow, that he might give us an Experiment of the prevalence of Prayer, *ver.* 16. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* As if he had said, my personal Prayer you shall to your satisfaction find effectual, but this further assurance will I give you, that the Prayers you put up in my *Name* shall be no less efficacious than those I my self present in mine own Person; for upon my request you shall be endow'd with the same Spirit that breaths but mine, and

my Merit is not confin'd to my Perſon, the vertue thereof will be extended to your pleadings in my Name, through the co-operation of that Holy One, who ſhall be your aid, and with unutterable groans cointercede for you. Indeed this Heavenly Dove comes only in at the Window of Prayer; but we muſt put forth our hand to take it, and heartily, humbly, believingly to beg it, is as little as we can do; if we ſluggiſhly put our hand into our Boſom, and refuſe this labour, we together with it reject the Olive Branch of Peace: But who in his wits would not beg with all manner of Prayer, *Publick*, *Private*, *Secret*, *Mental*, *Vocal*, with a Form, without, when he may be aſſured if he ask to receive, that his Joy may be full, *Joh.* 16. 24. This 94th *Pſalm* and the reſt, moſt of them ſeem in their compoſure to be deſign'd by the Penmen for Privacy, though God had a further deſign in them, *viz.* to make them Publick, and part of the Canon of Scripture, for the guidance of his Church in all Ages; and aſſuredly, he is a ſtranger to heavenly Comforts, who is a ſtranger to ſecret Converſes and Communion with God. 'Tis true, God by bringing theſe ſecret breathings of holy Souls after himſelf, in theſe *Pſalms* to a more publick uſe, and making their private Forms of Prayer as it were the common Liturgy of his Church in all Generations, may ſeem graciouſly to intend the honour of his publick Worſhip by the Church, ſince he hath pickt out that for Catholick advantage, which in reality was a Treaſure in all their private Devotions, pretermitting the reſt. For that more were compoſed by them, I no more doubt than that other Books were made by *Solomon*, beſides thoſe preſerv'd in the Holy Writings. And that Forms of Humane Compoſure, as well as

Divine

Divine Inſpiration, were made uſe of by holy Souls, without impeach of any crime therein; particularly without the guilt of Idolatry, (the ſenſleſs ſottiſh charge of ſome againſt a Form) is demonſtrable from the *New Teſtament*, where Chriſts Diſciples beſeech him to teach them to pray as the *Phariſees* and *John* taught theirs. They taught them Forms and ſo did he; theirs Humane, his Divine. But if this were ſo foul a crime, ſo odious to God, would he (who is ſo ſevere againſt Phariſes upon other occaſions, even in relation to their Prayers) give it the honour of an approving Imitation, and not rather chaſtize it with the Scorpions of a bitter rigorous reproof, and check his Diſciples deſire to be Idolaters, or ſymbolize with them? I could demonſtrate irrefragably, that this whimzy would abſolutely turn all Vocal Prayer whatever out of the Church, if it were as true as it is abominably falſe; but this is no place for it.

The choice which God made for the Church of theſe more refined ſuſpirations of pure and heavenly Souls, that in a zealous ardour of divine and raiſed affection, lifted up themſelves towards his holy Habitation, in theſe Forms of his own dictating and directing by his holy Spirit, and his applying them to publick uſe, are a teſtimony that he accounts the honour of more to be more honour, and his reſerving the beſt for the Church, when others are loſt, declares, that he expects the beſt from it. His own is to him always moſt acceptable, and adminiſtring hereof to his Church, to offer before him, he evidences that he would have its Offerings to be always acceptable, and in this proviſion he gives the Publick a preference to any thing perſonal, which alſo he further advances by making theſe publick Miniſtrations the

ordinary means to beget ſpiritual Life, and therefore Peace. But then nevertheleſs, the benefit of that which we enjoy in Publick, depends upon what we are in Private; and the main buſineſs of Church Offices and Ordinances, is to make us inwardly and ſecretly ſound and ſolid Chriſtians. For God no more regards outward publick Semblances, without Sincerity, than a whited Sepulchre; his general end is to make us upright *Nathanaels*, *Iſraelites* indeed in whom there is no guile, not gilded *Hypocrites*; and no better are we, whatever our viſible Sacrifices may be, if yet we retain our Chambers of Imagery in private, and do not break down the Idols of our Hearts; ſtriving to be inwardly before God, what before Men we appear to be outwardly; which we ſhall never do, if we take not our Hearts to taſk in ſecret. Let us blow never ſo many Trumpets before our ſelves, ruffle and brave it as triumphantly as is imaginable, in the phantaſtry of our Silk and Satten Devotion, before Men; yet if our heavenly Father never meet us in a Cloſet, if there we have nothing acceptable to preſent him, if we take no pains there to dreſs up our inward Souls for his embraces; labouring to the utmoſt to prepare our Work within there, when we deſign to build him a publick Temple, that the ſavour of our more retired Communion with God may abide upon our Spirits, and the perfume of that Incenſe, which we offer within the Veil, may aſcend, and become a viſible Cloud without; if not thus, I am affraid, that at the great reckoning, for all our Trimming and Gallantry, the Crowns and Garlands of our publick Sacrifices, we ſhall ſtand in *querpo*, and be found no better than Phariſees.

The

The *Psalmist*'s Prayer was first a secret ere it became a publick Application to God. Learn then, Oh my Soul, to begin there, and make it thy first and main business, to approve thy Heart secretly, to the Searcher of Hearts; and by Communing with it and God alone, deal effectually with it, that he, who sees in secret, may see, that it is in good earnest. Be much with God in thy Meditations before, that thou mayst not have thy straggling Thoughts to gather up and fix, when thy Affections are to enter into a vigorous pursuit after Grace and God. See that there be not a reserved Lust within, that would hide it self from the Lord, when thou shouldst make thy unreserved Acknowledgments. Let not thy Confessions be a bare heartless enumeration of thy Sins, but the real exercise of true Repentance, least they pass only for self Accusations, and thine own Mouth produce the Testimony against thee, which will cast and condemn thee. O learn inwardly to loath in thy Heart those hateful Vomits which thy Mouth casts out, that thou mayst return to them never, never. Learn to loath thy self for the sake of the nasty Filth and Rottenness, nay the Venom, the Toads, the Fiends that thou harboureſt within, and what thou loatheſt resolve utterly, eternally to relinquish and abandon, (from this very day forward) as an offence and abomination to the Lord.

But thou must not only in thy recesses and personal converses with God, fly from and abhor thy Sins as *Styx* that scalding River of Brimstone in Hell; that's not all, thou must fix and establish thy self by Resolution and Grace invariably for God and Goodness, and for that end endeavour that all

*Rom.* 12. 9. ἀποστυγοῦντες τὸ πονηρὸν.

thy Petitions, may be the exerciſe of Faith, without which thou ſhalt receive nothing at the Hands of the Lord. Cold Petitions only beg denials, and faithleſs ſet a ſeal upon thoſe denials, to render them irreverſible. Chriſt in the days of his Fleſh, offered up ſtrong cries, *Heb.* 5. 7. Well they might, the ſtrength of *Iſrael* dwelt in his Fleſh, *Joh.* 1. 14. *Col.* 2. 9. the fulneſs of the Godhead fill'd him with Vigour and Power. But the ſtrength of thy cries, Oh my Soul, is thy Faith, the condition of the Promiſes; yet not abſolutely in it ſelf but relatively to him; thy Faith is the ſtrength of thy Prayers, and He the ſtrength of thy Faith. The Golden Scepter of Divine Grace and Love, will never be held out to any who bring not this *Teſſera* or Token; produce this, and then, *What is thy Petition, Ob Soul?* and it ſhall be granted, and what is thy Requeſt? it ſhall be performed even to the half of the Kingdom. Nothing binds the Hands of Miracle-working, helping, healing Power, but Unbelief, *Mat.* 13. 58. *Mark* 6. 5. One Evangeliſt ſays he did, another he could do no mighty Work, *becauſe of their Unbelief.* But to Faith all things are poſſible, becauſe to God, who hath promiſed upon that condition. Nothing therefore, Oh my Soul, doſt thou want but Faith. Thus am I drawn unawares to that which ſhould be another Ingredient of the Character.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

*A Third Qualification of the Subject of Comfort*, Faith.

3. THe Pſalmiſt was a Perſon that liv'd by Faith, not by Sight, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. Which Scripture warrants me to take the Word [*Faith*] in a ſpecial, not general ſenſe, as 'tis ſometimes uſed. I ſuppoſe by [*Faith*] the Apoſtle means the ſame Grace, in the ſame notion, that has ſo glorious things reported of it, *Heb.* 11. *The* [ὑπόστασις] *ſubſtance or ſubſiſtence of things hoped for* [ἔλεγχος] *the evidence* [*convictive proof*] *of things not ſeen.* A divine diſpoſition which enables us to behave our ſelves under the apprehenſion of Inviſibles and Futurities, as if preſent real Senſations; which gives thoſe things that we feel not, as perfect command over us as if we ſaw and handled them. An effectually working Heart and Life-ruling Belief of God's Word and Promiſes. The firſt moſt immediate and proper effect whereof is, a concrediting, entruſting our ſelves with God in Chriſt. The Word [*Truſt*] is for the moſt part expreſſive of it in the Old Teſtament. Now that this holy Man thus walkt by Faith, the Pſalm gives full evidence, and that as to both the parts, 1. *Confidence*, 2. *Aſſurance.*

1. As to himſelf, *Ver.* 2. Notwithſtanding the Combinations of his Adverſaries to condemn him, he commits his Cauſe to God for defence, venturing himſelf upon his Power and Goodneſs, as a ſufficient ſecurity; and upon clear evidence of intereſt claims propriety in God. *God is my defence and the Rock of my Refuge*; there is his Affiance. *My God*; there is his Aſſurance.

2. As

2. As to Others, 1. *The Church of the Godly*, ver. 14. *The Lord will not cast off his People, neither forsake his Inheritance: But Judgment shall return unto Righteousness.* That is either, 1. Though the Righteous be now condemned, *ver.* 21. and consequently Righteousness it self by the perverse Judgment of evil Men; and therefore Judgment may now seem to have left, parted from, and forsaken Righteousness: They do not go together, there's Judgment, but no Righteousness in it: yet they shall meet again. Judgment that hath run away from it shall return to it; the Righteous shall not any more have wrong, but right in Judgment; it shall not be against, but for them.

Or 2dly. The Righteous which have been deprived of the power of Judgment, or Government of the Kingdom, by a Throne of Iniquity, *ver.* 20. shall recover their Authority. And 'tis very usual for the *Abstract* to be put for the *Concrete* in Scripture, and even in this Psalm, as *ver.* 11. *Vanity* for Vain: So *ver.* 17. *Silence* for a silent place, *&c.* So here *Righteousness* for Righteous Men, and *ver.* 14. *Inheritance* for inherited People. Or thus, *Righteousness* had the Rule in *Samuel*'s days; now in *Saul*'s, 'tis depressed; but shall be restored. *Judgment shall be administred in Righteousness under* David's *Government, and all the upright in Heart shall return or turn* (as that word is oft used, as *Jer.* 8. 4, *&c.*) *after it*, that is, shall own it, return to their Allegiance, to Justice and *David*.

3dly. *Judgment shall return to Righteousness*, that is, God shall another day, *viz.* on the day of *Judgment*, Vindicate the Righteous, clear up his Dispensations, Judge righteously those that have judged his Righteous Servants unrighteously; and judge his People, repent himself concerning his Servants;

Servants; and though in his Judgments upon Earth, he hath seem'd to be more against them than any, yet will he then be wholly for them, and pass Judgment on their side. *Vid. plura c.* 17.

2. As to the *Cœtus Malignantium*, *ver.* 21. the *Congregation of Condemners*; he foresees an end of their *Prosperity*, the beginning of their *Calamity*, *ver.* 10. *A Pit digging for them*, ver. 13. and their final Execution, *ver.* 23. Thus we see his *Faith*; and I am ready to think that this was the great Instrument of his Comfort. Whatever troubles befel he could see through them by *Faith*. 'Twas a judicious saying of a good Man, That *in all Afflictions and Straits Faith can find an outgate*. This is a real ground of Consolation. All the Bonds, Chains, Cords of Affliction to Faith are, like *Sampson's*, but as a Thread that hath felt the Fire. All the Rage and Malice of Earth and Hell, but like his *Lyon*: *Faith* can rend them in pieces. 'Tis too hard for them, it can fetch Hony, Comfort out of them. If this Grace can make that present which is not yet; realize that which being only in its causes is at present nothing; then can it take up the comfort of a Blessing in the Promise, and live upon its sweetness, as if it were already in Possession. There's no distinction of times to *Faith*: It enjoys not its objects in succession, but at once. Nothing to it is past and to come, (though to sense there be) all is present and in view, in hand. It sees with the Eye of God in the Promise, and therefore sees as he sees. It lives with Christ in Heaven, and therefore lives as he lives, *Gal.* 2. 20. It is an endless possession of Life all at once, as they describe Divine Eternity. Oh happy Soul, that is enrich'd with this noble Grace, whereby 'tis endow'd with God and all things! Oh unspeakable misery of those

thoſe that live (or rather continually die) without it. To be in Unbelief is to be in Hell, *i. e.* in ſtate, the place is but a Circumſtance. The ſubſtance of Hell conſiſting in three things, 1. Being under a Sentence of Condemnation and the Curſe, *Joh.* 3. 18. *He that believes not is condemn'd already.* 2. Irrecoverable loſs of Happineſs, *Joh.* 3. 36. *He that believes not ſhall not ſee Life, i. e.* if he never believe he ſhall never ſee Life Eternal. And 3. Everlaſting ſenſe of Wrath, *Joh.* 3. 36. *The wrath of God abides upon him*; does not meerly, as *Ezekiel*'s Flying Roll, paſs over him; but on him it ſettles, and reſts, and dwells, as in its fixed and indefeaſible Inheritance, its proper and unchangable Home and Habitation. Ah dolorous State! Ah wretched Soul! Better a thouſand times thou hadſt never been, than to have thus abuſed thy Being, in precipitating thy ſelf into ſo formidable an Abyſs of woe. Wilt thou then, Oh my Soul, live the life of the Juſt by Faith, that thou maſt not always be dying this accurſed death of Hypocrites and Unbelievers; and be yet more grievouſly rack'd with diſmal expectations of infinitely worſe to come? Shall inviſible and eternal things over-rule thee, as having a preſent ſenſation or feeling of their reality? Canſt thou now and then take a turn in the ſuperiour World, as one come to *Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the General Aſſembly and Church of the firſt born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect, and to Jeſus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the Blood of Sprinkling which ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel*, Heb. 12. 22,23,24? What report canſt thou give concerning the

the promiſed Land of Everlaſting Light, and Love and Life? Haſt thou ever been upon the Mount to take a proſpect of it? What remarkable thing therein has invited thy ſerious Meditations, to take a more ſtrict and narrow view, and make it thy perpetual repaſt and delight? Haſt thou walked through the breadth and the length thereof, in a diligent ſearch and ſurvey to behold the Beauty, the Sweetneſs, the Perfection, the Glory, of the Inhabitants; the Employments, the Fruits, the Enjoyments, the Entertainments, the Joys and Conſolations to be poſſeſt there, in an unconceivably rich degree of ſatisfactorineſs; where there's an everlaſting Spring, and an everlaſting Harveſt of unutterable Pleaſure and Contentation? Doſt thou even now enter upon thy lot and reſt there, *Heb.* 4. 3. and live upon the riches of that Inheritance, making a ſpiritual livelyhood for thy ſelf out of the abundance and ſtore of Heaven? Where are thy Treaſures, thy Jewels and pleaſant things, thy moſt amiable and delectable Companions? *Seeing him who is inviſible*, Heb. 11. 27. Canſt thou endure, and bear up under the Rage and Violence of a turbulent ill-condition'd World; the Reproaches and Scorns of Men, the Fury of Devils, the Pangs of Affliction; and in a calm of ſweet compoſure and reſt, anchor thy ſelf on the *Rock of Ages*, as thy beſt ſecurity and ſingular ſatisfaction. Really, Faith is all things, 'tis Wealth in Poverty, Health in Sickneſs, a good Report or Name under Defamations, *Heb.* 11. 2. Pleaſure in Pain, Reſt in Labour, Life in Death, a Heaven of Peace and Joy in a Hell of Miſery and Torment. If thou canſt not bleſs thy ſelf with the ſolace of a Friend on Earth, Faith will acquaint thee with, and endear thee to Multitudes in Heaven. Although

though thy Circumstances be as deplorable as thy Redeemers, worse than the Birds and Foxes; yet thy Faith has for thee *a House not made with Hands, Eternal.* Is thy own Country or City too hot for thee? this Grace finds for thee *a better Country, a City that hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*, Heb. 11. 16. *By it commit the keeping of thy Soul in well doing to thy Faithful Creator. Espouse the ever blessed Jesus, embrace the Precepts, kiss the Promises*, Heb. 11. 13. and then all's thine own, from the clod under thy Feet, to the height and crown of Heavenly Glory. For Faith to be a *Menaicant* is impossible. It has all and abounds, and is full, if it be a full unfeigned Faith. A Believer is never in want if he want not Faith, the due degree and measure of Faith. And the measure effectual and acceptable is not high; 'tis the Truth rather than Strength. A Grain will remove Mountains, *Mat.* 17. 20. Make Trees to grow in the midst of the Sea, *Luke* 17. 6. Divide the Waters, and convert Seas and Rivers into dry Land, *Heb.* 11. 20. and make even a *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Hell-hot Furnace of Fire so forget its Property, as not to be able to singe a hair, *Dan.* 3. 27. compar'd with *Heb.* 11. 33, 34. Every thing must be a Rebel against its own Nature, and bow to the Omnipotency of Faith; that is to the Almightiness of that infinite Nature, which is engag'd to, and by Faith. Oh then my Soul, where is thy Faith? What is thy Faith?

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

*A Fourth Property of the Subject of Comfort,* Inoffensive Conſcience.

4. THis Sacred Writer was one that took ſingular care not to live under the reproach of his own Conſcience; *That herein did exerciſe himſelf always to have a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and toward Man,* Act. 24. 16.

1. What apprehenſions he entertain'd of that which is diſpleaſing to God we may judge, 1. By his applications to and pleadings with God for Vengeance upon the workers of Iniquity, *Ver.* 1, 2, 3, 4. 2. By his deep ſenſe of the Omnipreſence and Omniſcience of God, which he vehemently urges as a preſſing Argument to reſtrain and awe Men from Sinning, *ver.* 8, 9, 10, 11. 3. By his eſteeming it a part of Bleſſedneſs to learn Righteouſneſs under Divine Chaſtiſements, *ver.* 12. 4. By his enmity againſt Wicked Men, which he was ſo wiſe and good, as not to direct againſt their Perſons as ſuch, but only as infected with odious Crimes, *ver.* 16. and the whole current of the *Pſalm.* 5. By his accounting and acknowledging it a ſpecial Mercy to be upheld by God, when ready to ſlip, *ver.* 18. which I underſtand of ſliding into Sin *. 6. By his deprecating the fellowſhip of a Throne of Iniquity with God, *ver.* 20. The Queſtion there, *Shall the Throne,* &c. is to be reſolv'd into a Negative Propoſition. It cannot, ſhall not. Why? What becauſe a Throne? No aſſuredly, 'tis then the Iniquity that dethrones and hurles it down from Communion with Heaven, into Confuſion with Hell.

* *which is argued and proved. c. 11.*

And

And *ver.* 23. expoſes to a certain and remedileſs cutting off and ruin. This was the Holy Authors ſenſe of Sin in others; and can any Man do thus that makes no conſcience of diſhonouring God by Omiſſions or Commiſſions? Would a Man of his Condition, Underſtanding and excellent Qualifications, proſecute other Mens Crimes with ſuch a height and heat of Enmity, and yet be at peace with and palliate his own? Arraign Treaſon in others, and allow it in himſelf? Enhaunce Publick Wickedneſs, and hug Perſonal? The aggravations whereof he was more privy to than of any Man's beſide, and knew that the Treacheries of a Friend are worſe reſented than the Violences of an Enemy. 'Tis his own reaſoning, *Pſalm* 55. 12, 13. Would he not with an implacable Vengeance purſue, and exterminate every Sin in himſelf, that his own Soul might not become the Butt and Mark for that all-intelligent Vengeance of Heaven, which he truly thought did look with ſuch a formidable aſpect upon others? And if ſo, he muſt maintain a perpetual jealouſie of, and watchfulneſs over both Heart and Ways; and make Repentance a daily buſineſs, proſecuting his Corruptions to the very Death in Mortification, living in a never-ceaſing Combate with Satan, and this preſent inticeing World, as affraid of breathing in the Devils Air, or walking upon his Ground, or within his Pale; with a Religious warineſs obſerving every ſtep, leaſt it ſhould be upon a Snare, or into a Precipice, as became a Man after God's own Heart, whoſe whole courſe of Life was deſignedly a walk with God. Would not a Man of this Conſtitution, with a ſingular Providence and Caution, eſchew all appearances or occaſions of, or Temptations to Evil, of every kind, both Spiritual and Carnal?

Carnal? since both alike are visible to that God, who hath [ἐνδικον ὄμμα] an Eye every where, to direct his Vengaence, *ver.* 9, 10. *Psal.* 10. 14. Would not this complexion of Soul, oblige his utmost endeavours and diligence, circumspectly to keep his Heart, and engage the assistance and care of Almighty Grace, to be his security against whatever might entangle or defile it. I do not question but that with the highest solicitude and Conscience, he attended the just and watchful Government of his Actions, under the command of these Perceptions he entertain'd of the invisible Eye, *ver.* 9. and of his most secret imperceptible Thoughts, upon the Sensations he retain d of God's intuition and censure of all humane Cogitations, *ver.* 10, 11. Which may be thus rendred. *He that teacheth* Adam *Knowledge, the* LORD *knowing the thoughts of* [Adam] *because they are* [Abel] *Vanity.* The *Septuagint* translate [הֶבֶל] not participially but verbally, and *Adam*, *Abel*, appellatively, and so they ought, and *Adam* plurally, *Abel* not in the Abstract, but Concrete, thus; *The* LORD *knoweth the Thoughts of Men that they are vain*, which the Apostle follows in all but the version of *Adam*, which with him is [the Wise] 1 *Cor.* 3. 20. *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts* (or *Reasonings* as 'tis rendred *Luk.* 9. 46.) *of the Wise*, who of all Men have the greatest skill and cunning to hide their Thoughts, and the highest abilities to solidate, improve, direct and govern their reasoning and thinking Powers, that if any Mens, their Cogitations and Discourses, one would think, might be above the brand of the Text. The reason of this change I cannot determine, 'tis satisfactory that it was made by the inspiration of the *Holy Ghost*, who best knew his own meaning. But

ſhall I offer a Conjecture? The Appellative *Adam* points to the firſt Man, from whom the denomination is drawn. And before his fall, no doubt *Adam* was poſſeſt of a degree of Wiſdom, paramount to all his Poſterity, *Solomon* not excepted; and this Name was impos'd upon him, when he flouriſh'd in the glory of that excellent Spirit. I do not queſtion, but that even in his collapſed Nature, a degree thereof was preſerv'd ſuperiour to all in his Succeſſors, unto whom 'tis derived very much rebated, partly though corruption, partly through feminine imbecility. For the difference of natural abilities in Man and Man, or Man and Woman ariſes not from the ſpiritual part; all Souls being equal in Nature, Faculties and Power. But the defect of Vital Flame, or Natural Heat and Spirits cauſing an indiſpoſition of Organs in their firſt Formation, with a coolneſs and torpidneſs in the Animal Spirits, the Souls Vehicle and immediate Inſtrument in its Operations *ad extra*; is the true Origin of all thoſe Imperfections viſible in the Intellectuals, both of that cooler Sex, and the other; and all may be encreaſed by the Immorality and Intemperance of Parents, or other accidental Cauſes, Diſeaſes, Paſſions, External Occurrents, *&c.* Now may not St. *Paul* in tranſlating [*Adam the wiſe*] allude or have ſome reſpect to the incomparable Wiſdom of that ſource of Humane Nature? However it was moſt accommodate to the tenour of his Diſcourſe there, and not aliene from the ſcope of Place here. For undoubtedly thoſe he calls Brutiſh and Fools, *ver.* 8. and Proud, *ver.* 2. had no humble apprehenſions of their own Abilities; but did imagin that in their Oppreſſions they dealt wiſely, as the *Ægyptians*, Exod. 1. 10. *Atheiſts*, *Deiſts*, *Perſecutors*, generally conceiting themſelves the wiſeſt

wisest of Men, and the profoundest of Politicians; but the rest of the World only a knot of Addle Eggs. Yet the *Holy Ghost*, who best knows, and never can be out in his Judgment of Men, both here and other where, even in this Book, calls them by their proper Names as *Psal.* 14. and 53. *Folly*, *Atheism*, *Persecution*, are both in Scripture and Nature individual inseparable Companions, and no marvel. For if a Man can be such a Fool as to turn God out of the World, and Being, in his Thoughts; no wonder if he be such a Barbarian as to turn Men, who are most God-like, out of the World, with his Hands; and again if a Man can be so bestially Savage, as to embrew his Hands in the Blood of Innocents, 'tis his Interest to be so foolish as to believe there is no Providence and God. I therefore again demand whether it be possible, for a Man, living under the dominion of these most rational Notions of God, and the folly, brutishness, and madness of working Iniquity, to contradict all the Principles of Sense, Reason and Religion, in so high a degree as to involve himself in the same Condemnation? Could a Man sensible of Divine observance of, and animadversion upon vain Thoughts, indulge such in his own Mind? and if not vain, sure much less vile and wicked. Will a Man confidently believing and asserting the all-intelligent Nature of God, here represented under the Metaphor of *Hearing*, dare to permit his Tongue to take an unbecoming *Parrhesy*, or liberty of bolting out any thing? Shall that Mouth spit froth or filth in the Face of Heaven, which professes that 'tis all Ear and Eye? *Lastly*, How can he who is so thorowly perswaded of God's inspection, with an avenging Eye, as to account those brutish and

Fools that disbelieve it: Be so impudently daring and flagitious, as (like that Blasphemous *Dicer* in *Fincelius*) with impious and accursed Hands to throw his Dagger against Heaven, and stick it in the Heart of God? Oh Hellishness! Oh Horror! I mean be wicked in his Works, which is *Deicide*, or *God-killing*. Indeed a Man, *i. e.* one endowed with intelligent and reasoning Powers, who can proportion his Sensations to the nature of things, much more a *Christian Man*, that borrows his Light and Eyes too, in a more especial manner from Heaven, must needs behold more uglyness and odiousness in Sin, than any thing imaginable. For we do not take our measures of Privatives, from themselves meerly, but that positive Being and Goodness to which they are opposed, and the excellency of the Subject wherein they are seated. Blindness therefore in *Man*, the most noble Creature endowed with Sense, is a greater evil than in a Brute, especially since Man is capable of using sight to more worthy and eximious purposes. Sin is a privation of Holyness, which is the only mean to bring Man to the possession of infinite Goodness. Heb. 12. 14. *Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* Matth. 5. 8. *Blessed are the pure in Heart for they shall see God.* So *Isa.* 33. 15, 17. Sin therefore is the greatest Evil, because it deprives mediately of the greatest Good natural [or supernatural] *God*; and as it deprives immediately of the greatest good *Moral Holiness*. As 'tis contrary to the purity of the Creature it is but a finite evil; but infinite as contrary to the Purity of the *Creator*. As a violation of the Law and Principles of Nature and Reason in us; 'tis only of a limitted Malignity, but of a boundless and unlimited Pestilency, as a violation of the Law and Principles of Holiness

Holineſs in God. 'Tis a tranſgreſſion of the Law of God, therefore a contempt and ſcorn put upon his infinite Authority, and Juſtice, and Holineſs, and Power, and Goodneſs, and Glory, and Happineſs. One would imagin it was but a light matter to eat the Fruit of a Tree in Paradiſe; but 'twas no light matter to do it againſt a great God, againſt the expreſs prohibition, and in a ſlighting neglect of, or vilifying diſregard or deſpite to the ſevere Sanctions of an infinitely Wiſe, Holy and Juſt *Creator.* Therefore Infinitennſs it ſelf being concerned in Sin, renders it exceeding ſinful; whence nothing in it more afflicts a good Soul, than its contrariety and offenſiveneſs to that glorious Majeſty. And indeed Sin as Sin is againſt none but God. The Facts that are ſinful as being againſt God, may be hurtful or injurious as againſt Men; but the formal nature of Sin lies not in that, neither is the violation of Humane Laws, therefore a Sin, becauſe againſt the Sanctions of Man; but only becauſe and as far as Violations of the Law of God, immediately in the matter, or remotely in the Tranſgreſſion of the Fifth Command requiring ſubjection to Authority. Therefore ſays *David,* Pſal. 51. 4. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned.* What? Becauſe being King he was by no Man Challengable, to none accountable for any wrong but God alone? Admit this true in *Theſi,* yet in *Hypotheſi* 'tis abſurd and ridiculous, as part of an Addreſs to God, and an exerciſe of Repentance. If it be not underſtood comparatively, or with reſpect to the formality of Sin; ſpoken abſolutely, 'tis abſolutely falſe. In Sin there is a Fault and a Guilt, ſo in *David*'s Murther, and Adultery. Conſider the former, taking away Life is ſometimes Juſtice: When is it a Fault? only

when againſt Law. What Law? God's or Man's? Not as againſt Man's further than as firſt againſt God's. For Man's Law cannot make that Murther which is Juſtice by the Law of God; nor the contrary. That is Man cannot reverſe what God hath eſtabliſhed. 'Tis therefore the Divine Law in Nature or Scripture, and that alone which determines concerning the Faultineſs or Faultleſſneſs of matters Originally and Architectonically; Man's Law only Secondarily and Subordinately. The formal reaſon then of the faultineſs is the contrariety to the Law of God. And nothing is Sin, meerly in reſpect of the matter, but the Formality. So the taking away *Uriah*'s Life, was not a fault merely as taking away Life; for had he been a Criminal that would have been Juſtice: But a Sin it was only under the notion, as 'twas taken away under ſuch Circumſtances, as the Law of God diſſallow'd. The matter of the Sin therefore was againſt *Uriah*, but the Form and Eſſence of the Sin did conſiſt in nothing but only in its being againſt God, *a Tranſgreſſion of the Law of God*, 1 Joh. 3. 4. So then, 'tis not the Offence againſt Man ſimply and abſtractly conſidered; but the Offence againſt God, that properly and formally conſtitutes Sin. Every wrong that is in Sin to our ſelves, to Men, to our fellow Creatures, that groan under their thraldom to our Luſts, and fare worſe for their ſake, ſhould affect us, but moſt of all the wrong we do to God, as being the greateſt injury againſt the greateſt Majeſty. For even upon Earth, Crimes advance in their heinouſneſs, according to the degree and dignity of Perſons. To call a mean Man *Knave* is a light matter, ſcarce actionable; to call a Nobleman, *Scandalum Magnatum*, deeply finable; to call the King ſo, *Treaſon*, puniſhable with Death. Oh then, what is

Blaſphemy

Blasphemy or any Sin against the *King of Kings*, the infinitely glorious *King of Heaven and Earth*. Common sense will assure us, that the more mischief and hurt a Sin does, or may do, the greater it is, and merits greater Punishments. Now the more publick and useful any Persons are, so much the more mischievous are any actings against them; because Government is essential to the good of the whole Community, and therefore those who make attempts against Men in Publick Place and Authority, strike at and attempt the destruction of all subject to their Jurisdiction. To kill a Judge upon the Bench is High Treason, both as a vertual acting against the King, and also as a murthering the Justice of the Nation, a violence against the Right, and Property, and Life of all, that are or may be in a capacity to receive Justice from him. So to kill the King is vertually a killing the whole Kingdom, with its Honour, Authority, Justice, Right, Property, Government, all that the King is entrusted with, the Privileges, Laws, Liberties, and Immunities of all Men. Sin therefore is an Evil transcendently great, above all Expression, above all Imagination, as a horrid mischievous attempt against the Life, the All of God himself.

1. Vertually and Practically as far as in the Sinner lies it annihilates,

1. The Being and Presence of God. For to do that abominable Evil, in his very Eye-sight, which the presence even of a little Child would restrain from, this makes nothing of him, lays him lower than the sillyest most despicable of his Creatures, makes him less and more contemptible than a very Baby, and ranks him with Irrational and Non-Intelligent Beings, which is to un-God him.

2. It Annihilates the Authority and Legislative Power of God. For to transgress notwithstanding the impress hereof, upon the Law, is in effect to averr, that there is no such thing, that 'tis but a Fable, a Fancy, nay, 'tis to despise and spurn it out of the World, which is to kick out the Being of God. For that which has no Authority cannot be God.

2. 'Tis a direct affront to the Holiness of God, as perfectly and irreconcileably repugnant to it; and Contraries as far as they can destroy each other. By thy Impurities thou thrusteſt God out of thy Soul; he departs when this Evil Spirit enters with allowance; he bears an eternal Antipathy against it, cannot live together it. There can be no Communion betwixt God and *Belial*. If Idols be set up God is tumbled down. If Sin must live within thee thou dost thy utmost to make God die, stabbing him to the Heart in that which is the Heart of all his Perfections his Holiness. He cannot live if that die.

3. 'Tis a Challenge to his Justice, and would Duel it to Death. For whilst I am not affraid of, and restrain'd from Sin by the Sanctions of the Law, I send a Defiance to the Justice of God, and set my self above it, trample it under my Feet, with drawn Sword, drive it before me gasht with innumerable Wounds, make a Dish-clout of it. For did I believe that there were any such thing indeed as Omnipotent Righteousness, to vindicate to the utmost all violations of the Law, 'twould effectually curb and quell the licentiousness of my Spirit and Actions; but whilst it does nothing with me, I make nothing of it. By not standing in awe of it any more than if it were not; in effect I do my utmost endeavour that it be not, I take away its being

being as to my self, and as far as in me lies to all the World, by making a slight of it. How these Attributes Holiness and Justice are the Noblest Life of God, his richest Glory, which whilst I I rob him of, I labour to destroy him.

*Lastly*, Sin is a Contradiction (or Contrafaction rather) to Gods Government, an opposition to and counteracting his Regality, Dominion and Rule over the Rational World; Treason, Rebellion against the Soveraign Majesty of Heaven. Yea any the least Sin is no less. One would think that a partly enforced transgressing a Law of God, in mere indifferent matter, when done with a good intention, for a good end, were the least of all Sins. And such was *Saul's* sparing the best of the *Amalekites* Cattle for Sacrifices to God, 1 *Sam.* 15. *Saul* was but newly settled in his Kingdom, and some grumbled at his Government, 1 *Sam.* 10. 27, and 11, 12. In this not throughly composed state of affairs God commands him to destroy utterly the Sinners, the *Amalekites*, and all they had, *chap.* 15. 3. But he for fear of the People, *ver.* 24. *i. e.* least they should be discontented with him, and upon his not hearkning to them, *ver.* 24. *obeying their Voice*, be alienated from him and his Government, as a Man of a stubborn inflexible Spirit, and uncounsellable, *spared the best of the Cattle for Sacrifices to God*, ver. 15. A good and laudable end, had it otherwise been duly circumstantiated. Yet this God calls *Rebellion*, *ver.* 23. and equalls it with the most horrid Crimes *Witchcraft* and *Idolatry*; and punishes it with the utter rejection of *Saul and his House* from the Kingdom, 1 *Sam.* 20. 17, 18. Now Rebellion is Treason, to our power destroying the Soveraignty of God, therefore his Being and Life. but an attempt against

againſt the Life of God is an Evil aſtoniſhingly great and hainous. For

1. 'Tis in effect a hurling the whole Creation into Ruin and Confuſion, becauſe it cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt a Moment without him. But,

2. And, eſpecially, 'tis a vertual annihilation of God himſelf, *i. e.* of Infinite Perfection; and to deſign, nay to effect, the deſtruction of all Created Nature, is nothing in compariſon of acting toward the deſtruction of the Diety. *For to him the whole World is as nothing, all Nations but as the drop of a Bucket, and the light ſmall duſt of the Balance,* Iſa. 40. 15. The World being but finite, to Murther and Ruin all of it intirely, Angels, Men, Brutes, Inanimates, would but be a finite Evil. But God being an Infinite Nature, a vertual deſtroying him muſt needs be an Evil vertually infinite; and 'tis but Juſtice to proportion Puniſhments to Crimes; eſpecially where the only ſaving Remedy of infinite value is contemned, which is another act of *God-ſlaughter* or *Murther*. The Holy Ghoſt therefore calls it *a Crucifying afreſh the Son of God, and putting him to open ſhame*, Heb. 6. 6. And which comprehends yet more Indignity, *a treading under Foot the Son of God, and accounting the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he* (or rather it, *viz.* the Covenant) *was Sanctified* (See *Heb.* 9. 18, 19, 20, 22, 23.) *a common* (tranſlated *unholy*) *thing, and doing deſpite to the Spirit of Grace*, Heb. 10. 29. Wilt thou not then, Oh my Soul, diſlike, diſavow, relinquiſh, deteſt and abhor this greateſt of Evils; for God's ſake whom it ſo highly affronts, and offends. Shall any of this abominable curſed thing cleave unto thee? And wilt thou in Affection adhere to it? Oh let the honourable Reſpect and Veneration thou beareſt to that ever ado-

rable

rable infinite Nature, which thou unconceivably wrongest by every Sin, prevail with and overcome thee, to a willingness to debase and loath thy self for that Evil, that only Evil, *Ezek.* 7. 5. Evil beyond all superlative, even to an Hyperbole, *Rom.* 7 13. How canst thou do less than prosecute with an indignant and implacable Malice those base sensual desires, which have glu'd thee to the present, dreggy, dirty, Dunghil Contentments, of a vain, ensnaring, turbulent, vexatious, defiling World, and diverted to a sordid wallowing in the nasty puddle and sink of all Moral Pollutions those noble Faculties which were formed by God to ascend above all Visibles, and ravish themselves with the view and fruition of his own incomprehensible Glories. Oh Folly and Frenzy not to be parallel'd or equal'd by all the Bedlams upon Earth! to prefer the Devil and Hell, before God and Heaven. Thou art destitute of all Sense, Reason, and Shame if it do not cut thee to the Heart, bleed out at thy Eyes, blush in thy Face, and groan in thy Conscience. Wilt thou then, Oh my Soul, in sincerity love thy Maker, who is infinitely worthy to beloved? Wilt thou from that Principle engage thy self to the utmost against every thing which he hates? Shall he to whom thou owest thy Being, Beauty, Hopes, and Happyness, have that interest in thee as to over-rule all thy inward-Motions, and byas them into a course perfectly contrary to that wherein they naturally run, and convert all thy Powers into Irascibles, or passionate yet rational Combatants, against those implacable Adversaries of the Divine and Humane Nature, which turn the World upside down, and will ere long bury it in Ashes and Ruins? Oh my Soul, What is there in thy Lusts that thou canst Love? What

in

in thy Sin that merits not a Vatinian hate? Is it not all Filth, Poyſon, Curſe, Hell? What, in a thing of ſo peſtilent a Nature, can bewitch thee to dote upon it? Why muſt that which is worſe than all the Devils in the Regions of Infernal Darkneſs, be advanced above thy Self, Vertue, Peace, Comfort, Chriſt and Celeſtial Glory? Are thy reaſonable Powers ſo abominably ſeduc'd and abus'd by falſe and fallacious Shadows, and Phantaſms, as to repreſent that in the dreſs of Heaven, which is the very deformity, foam and venom of thoſe dark Manſions of Horrour? Would any Man in his Wits ever chuſe and embrace thoſe poyſonful Toads and Vipers to lie next his Heart, and be warm in his very inmoſt Affections which to his intolerable anguiſh and woe, will be gnawing out his very Bowels for ever, and not intermit thoſe torturings for a moment, but augment them gradually to the uttermoſt?

But alas, this is only an Evil to thy ſelf, a poor mean chip of Being. Hell is but a ſenſible Comment and Paraphraſe upon, indeed but an Epitome and Breviate of thoſe Evils which Sin attempts to inflict upon the Deity it ſelf; which being impaſſible, as a Rock of Marble and Adamant, reverberates and reflects back upon the Head of the Sinner, thoſe Arrows of Vengeance which were directed againſt it. Were God capable of ſuffering, ſince he is infinitely ſenſible, Sin would torture him more than all the puniſhments of Hell can poſſibly do the Devils and Damned there. And the Son of God, for the ſame reaſon, and becauſe he ſuffered in ſuch a meaſure, as to give ſatisfaction, which all the Eternal Cruciations of the Damned can never do; did actually feel more evil in Sin, though he never committed any, than there can be

evil

evil in the everlasting Woes of Hell. And 'tis but just retaliation, to make the Violaters of that Law of Grace, established by this Son of God, for the recovery of lost Man, and his deliverance from the Wrath to come, even all unbelieving finally Impenitents, to feel something of the evil of that wherein he felt much more, and from which they will not be saved by him. Oh then my Soul, awake thy sense, and suffer with him in this Life, under some paining doleful Reflections upon the evil and sinfulness of thy Sin, as an offence and wrong to him. Oh be in bitterness for it, for him, as one is in bitterness and mourns for his First-born. Let nothing more afflict and vex thee, than the displeasingness of thy Sin to God, the despite in it to the supreme Majesty of Heaven. Bleed over those Wounds thy Sin has given the Lord of Life and Glory; be every day sick of that which made him die; aggravate it to the height in thy Meditations; and look to Heaven with the most ardent and passionate desires, that God would every day impress something more of his own Image upon thee, that thou mayst hate Sin with the hatred of God himself.

## CHAP. VI.

### *The Subject of Comfort, Inoffensive to Man.*

2. AS the Psalmist maintain'd a powerful sense of Duty to God, so he walk'd in a conscientious observance of his Duty to Man; as will be evident by considering particulars, respecting his Equals, his Enemies, and his Superiours.

1. His

1. His Compassion to and Condolements of the Servants of God in Affliction, intimated *ver.* 5, 6. with his Prayers for their deliverance by the God of *Revenges*, *ver.* 1. and the comfortable relief and assurances he gives them, *ver.* 12, 13, 14, 15. testifie his love to the Children of God. And 2. That he was not awanting to his Enemies, appears in the instructive Rebukes he gives them, *ver.* 8, 9, 10, 11. and the severe Cautions and Warnings he presents them, throughout the *Psalm.* And often the denunciation of Wrath, by a terrible brandishing the Flaming Sword of a Divine Threat, in the Eyes of Conscience, becomes a means through God's Concurrence, either to convert or at least restrain a bold and impudent Sinner. Neither is it usual for any Sinner, with seriousness to look up to God, till he be first knock'd down by the dreadful menaces of the Law. Attrition is generally antecedent to Contrition, though often the motions to Contrition be first presented. God himself humbles us ere he will exalt us. When the gentle attractives of Grace cannot draw us, the Terrors of his Wrath must drive us home to our Father's House. When God prevails not by the Cords of a Man the Bands of Love, to win us into an ingenuous acknowledgement of him; he will further try to vanquish our stubbornness, by the direful Scorpions of his Indignation. And 'twas not incongruous for the Psalmist to express a Love to the Persons even of wicked Persecutors, in the same Methods that were made use of by his Maker. *Lastly*, His conscience of Duty to his Superiours, is plain from *ver.* 21, 22. compared. For though in *ver.* 21. he speaks indefinitely, and in general of condemning the *Righteous and Innocent Blood*; yet the next *ver.* is determinate, and particular, plainly demonstrating,

ting, that the *Righteous* and *Innocent* he spoke of were no other than himself, or that at least he was one of them. *They condemn the Righteous and Innocent Blood; but the Lord is my defence.* Impertinent, if it were not, *They condemn my Righteous Soul, my Innocent Blood.* And of *David* this was undoubtedly true as he elsewhere witnesses, *Psal.* 59. 3, 4. *The Mighty are gathered against me, not for my Transgression, nor for my Sin, O LORD. They run and prepare themselves without my Fault.* There they were gathered together, here they *gather themselves together*; but 'twas against one whose Conscience did not challenge him for any Crime that could merit this at their Hands. He could appeal to the Lord, to be a Witness of his *Righteousness* and *Innocency* as to them, who as to him were not Righteous and Innocent, but framed mischief against him by a Law. But I cannot imagine, that in a solemn Address to God, this Holy Person would profess to be so just and harmless, if it were only so in outward semblance and act. Could he dissemble so grosly (that is act the part of a Knave to God and Man) as to pretend these, and yet permit his Mind and Heart inwardly to boyl over in Gall and Bitterness, ready upon all occasions to break out into Injury and Violence? Did he not know that the inward Lust is as really a violation of Innocence, as the outward Act? And durst he tell the Searcher of Hearts, that he was Innocent, when his Heart was Guilty? Well that which was just and right he practised, and his Tongue and Soul did not move in a contradiction to his Hands. No hurt he did, offer'd no wrong, either in Thought, Word or Deed. He was active for their good in Righteousness; but not at all to recompence them Evil for Evil in Rancour and Revenge.

venge. Had he taken a contrary Course? Had he been any other than passive under their active Malice, it might have been a just impeach to both his Righteousness and Innocency. Does he right that with-holds from Man his due? Does he no harm that acts to the prejudice and hurt of another? Let it then be granted, that his activity in an opposite way would have rendred him Guilty.

Particularly, 'twas a Throne of Iniquity that did persecute him, for no Crime of his own: Yet you see he does not in the least attempt or design to avenge himself with his own Hand, or stretch it out against the Lord's Anointed, as he speaks 1 *Sam.* 26. 9, 11. He peremptorily determines, that it could not be done without Guilt. Thus here he appropriates Revenge solely to God, as his Royalty and Prerogative, *ver.* 1. it belongs to thee; and what then has any other to do with it? This is a plain renunciation of all right to it himself: The Repetition cannot but have a singular Emphasis. Twice, *O Lord God of Revenges*, or *to whom Vengeance belongs*. Sure the Holy Penman would not have born up himself in Conscience of Innocence, with respect either to God or Man, had he harboured any designs to usurp the proper Honour of the *God of Revenges*, in seeking by Violence to right himself, against that Throne of Iniquity, which even by a Law endeavoured to do him manifest wrong. So Sacred is the Majesty of a Prince, that a good Conscience cannot be maintain'd in affronting it, though it act Unrighteously, much less when it acts righteously under an absolute and unlimited Monarchy. There's no relief on Earth against a Throne, though of Iniquity. From its unjust Judgment we have with the Psalmist liberty of Appeal to Heaven; but to attempt otherways,

is

is a manifest violation of the Rights both of God and Man. Of God, by invading his Property. Of the King, for who made thee his Judge, and set thee above him? Let the Supreme Monarch that rules be what he will, Just or Unjust, Jew or Heathen, or Turk, or Papist, or Protestant, true Worshiper, or Idolater, Christian, Antichristian, Religious, Irreligious, Holy or Wicked, I find not any Warrant, either in the Word of God, from Precept or Example, nor in any Ancient Father, nor in any approved Protestant Writer, for any Private Persons or Society of such, to oppose him by Violence, but the quite contrary. *Calvin* I know is charg'd with Antimonarchical Principles, but how justly will appear to any serious Considerer of that last Chapter of his Institutions; where §. 7. *sub fin.* he says, *The Government of one which least pleased the Great Wits of Old is commended by an eximious Testimony of God, above the rest.* And §. 8. permits not private Men to dispute which is best. And though he upon some accounts like *Aristocracy*, or a temper of that and *Polity*, as best: Yet saith, *Non id quidem per se, Not of it self.* But because Kings rarely moderate themselves, *&c.* which plainly intimates that he judged Monarchy the best in it self, though *Monarchs* not always the best: Yet whatever be less eligible, *ex vitio personarum*, he will not allow so much as the desire of a change in the Government set over us by God; but condemns it as Foolish, Needless, and Noxious. *Non modo stulta erit, & supervacua, sed prorsus noxiæ etiam cogitatio.* And how strict he is in requiring Subjection, even to Tyrannical Princes, See §. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. which would be too tedious to transcribe. That which some pick out to snarl at, in the end of §. 31. *De privatis hominibus*

*ſemper loquor, Nam ſiqui nunc ſint, &c.* as though he allow'd the three States to reſiſt the King: This cannot be concluded from his Words, which are *Hypothetical*, limited with a *Forte*, and 'tis but *pro officio intercedere*, and they are only Perſons, [*qui ſe Dei ordinatione libertatis tutores poſitos norunt*] which he does not forbid [*non veto*]. And let any Man of ſence judge whether this be a true or falſe Propoſition. *Thoſe Perſons who know themſelves ordain'd of God to be Guardians of Peoples Liberties ought to interceed according to the tenor of their Office, with ferocient Princes, in the Peoples behalf, and not connive at their Oppreſſions.* To make *pro Officio, contra Officium ſuum*, is wiſe Interpretation; but ſince he confines them within the boundaries of their Office, or Duty, he muſt be a very Spider indeed, that can ſuck Poyſon out of it. But that may ſeem more important which we find here, *ver.* 16. He demands, *Who will riſe up for me*, &c. Whatever he meant doubtleſs he judg'd it conſiſtent with Innocency, and a good Conſcience. To clear which,

1. The *Hebrew* to a Word runs thus, *Who will riſe to me, with the Evil Doers? Who will ſtand to me, with the Workers of Iniquity?* Now make what you can of it for the Doctrine of oppoſing Princes. Admit that [לי] may be Tranſlated [*For me*] or [*in my behalf*] as 'tis *Gen.* 23. 8, *&c.* Yet עם does not import Oppoſition and Contrariety, but Conjunction and Aſſociation; being of the kindred of עם *People.* And 'tis not (that I remember) any where in the Bible beſide tranſlated [*againſt.*] In all places where the *Holy Ghoſt* would ſignifie the Enmity or Contrariety of Perſons, or things, another Prepoſition is uſed, either [ב] to ſelect one place of Multitudes, becauſe very like the Phraſe here, *Pſal.* 34. 16. *The Face of the LORD*

*is*

is בעשי רע *against them that do evil*, &c. Or [ על ] to look no farther than this *Psalm*, and but two Verses below my Text, *ver.* 21. יגדו עלי־נפשי אזיק *They troop against the Soul of the Just.* 'Tis not sure for nothing that the Spirit of God here lays aside the usual manner of expressing himself. The reason is above our reach. But may not this account bid fair toward a Probability? That possibly some Persons were with *Saul*, and his Partakers, from whom the Psalmist had reason to expect better things, than from those who were his profest Enemies. The sense then will be, *Which of you all, that being born down with the stream of the times, associate with ill Men, will now rise and stand for me, to interpose and speak in my behalf, as once did the truly noble* Jonathan, *a Friend incomparable?*

2. The end for which he expected they should rise and stand up, is not express'd in that Verse; but the next has it express [ *a help* ] *Unless the* LORD (supply out of the former Verse) [ *had risen or stood* ] *a help to me*, &c. For since those Words will make good sense, why should aliene be inserted? Therefore on the other hand, make up the former Verse, by adding that out of this which was the end of their expected *rising* and *standing*, and 'tis thus, *Who will rise or stand a help to me with evil Doers*, &c. Now consider the quality of this help he expected, was it Forcible, Violent, Vengeful, by Arms and Bloodshed? No, this *Psalm* repudiates it in his appeals *to the God of Revenges*: And 1 *Sam.* 24. 12, 13. and 26. 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 23. He disclaims and abhors it as sinful; urgently dehorts from it, and rebukes the temptation to it, when irritated by his Followers, and invited by a fair opportunity and plausible argument. *Behold the day of the which the* LORD *said unto thee, Behold*

*I will deliver thine Enemy into thy hand, that thou mayst do to him as shall seem good unto thee.* It was then Moral help that he expected. Help by Counsel and Perswasion, not by Power and Compulsion: Such as he had from God, which was not a coactive, but a gentle, rational, and unforcible bowing the wills of Adversaries to desist. God did not constrain, but incline the Mind and Heart of *Saul* to cease the pursuit at *Selah Hammaleketh*; 1 *Sam.* 23. 26, 27, 28. To leave him untoucht, and return to his place, when by an experiment he was convinced of his Innocency, *chap.* 24. 22. and a second *chap.* 26. 25. *And since he foresaw that the* LORD *would cut of those Children of Men who stirr'd up* Saul *against him*, 1 Sam. 26. 19. And here doubles the expression of his assurance thereof, *ver.* 23. 'Tis madness to think that the aid he expected from Men was to usurp upon God, and take the work out of his hands. Therefore when the *Amalekite* told him he had kill'd *Saul* it cost him his Life, 2 *Sam.* 1. 14, 15, 16.

The Psalmist then was a Man that made Conscience of his Allegiance to his Prince, though wicked, unjust, and a Persecutor. No Man can maintain together Disloyalty and Innocence. The Office of Kings remains unvitiated, under the viciousness of their Persons. *Nero* was the Minister of God, *Rom.* 13. in respect of Authority, though the Devils Servant in his private Capacity. *Subjection* and *Loyalty* is due to the Throne, and the Man in it, not to the Beast in the bottomless Pit of Immorality and Barbarousness. Our Duty requires an owning him *Politically*, rather than *Ethically*, *i. e.* we must of necessity be subject to his Power, acting as the Vicegerent of God, and here obey him in every thing. But we must not be

actively

actively subject to his *Lusts*, acting as the Bond-slave of *Satan*, nor therein obey, or imitate him. Yet do not his Crimes to us devest him of his Right, any more than a *Father*. I find no exceptions or difference in the Precept, *Et ubi lex non distinguit non est distinguendum*. Where the Law limits not, we must not. Nothing that we suffer from Superiors can null the bond of the First Command. The Gospel as well as the Law obliges to be *subject for Conscience sake*, Rom. 13. 5. Ye must needs be subject not only for Wrath, *i. e.* for fear of Punishment; but for Conscience sake; *i.e.* out of obedience to God's Command, and from sense of Duty. In sum, since the Powers that be are God's Ordinations, we must obey all their lawful Commands, submit to their just Censures and Punishments, pay them all their dues both of *Reverence* and *Maintenance*. But since there is an Authority paramount to theirs, which has the first and supreme right over us, and which we must obey, rather than Men; if we be commanded to do any thing forbidden or forbid to do any thing commanded by God, we must not obey, but be willing to suffer without resistance. *For whoever resisteth the Power resisteth the Ordinance of God, and they that resist, shall receive to themselves* [κρίμα] *Judgment to Condemnation*, ver. 2. Now this resistance consists not in a modest refusal to do or not do what these Powers may enjoyn, contrary to the Injunctions of God; but in a disorderly, or forcible opposition to their Persons or Lawful Commands; [ἀντιτάσσειν] being to set up an order contrary to their order, which is here reported *damnable*, *i. e.* when their order is not against the order of God; their Laws not opposite to his. I know not but that this is a sound Rule, *That the Higher Powers are to be disobey'd*

*bey'd in nothing, except it be as plainly forbidden in Scripture or Nature, as diſobedience to thoſe Powers is.* I do not ſay expreſsly forbid, for ſometimes a Conſequence may be as plain as a Propoſition. But if a Man be not as fully ſatisfied from clear Evidence, that he cannot obey the Magiſtrate without diſobeying God; as he may be ſatisfy'd, that he muſt obey the Magiſtrate, in all things where God is not diſobey'd; he cannot diſobey with a good and ſafe Conſcience. For 'tis a Sin to diſobey where God interpoſes not, as well as a Sin to obey where he forbids. Nothing can take off the obligation to obey, but only Divine Authority, which laid it on. If you are not ſure that you have God's Warrant to diſoblige you from Obedience, you cannot be ſure that you do not ſin. For what can repeal God's Law to obey, but only God. And if you be not ſure that you do not ſin, you certainly do ſin, *i. e.* act doubtingly not in Faith, which is contrary to a good Conſcience, *Rom.* 14. *ult.*

*Cautiſſimi cujuſq; præceptum eſt: Quod dubitas, ne feceris.*

Since then the Command to obey is indubitable, what muſt I do when the matter commanded is not indubitably Lawful or Unlawful? If the thing in reality be lawful, I ſin in diſobeying the Power, if unlawful, I ſin in diſobeying God. Suppoſe I have weighty reaſons to induce me to believe the unlawfulneſs, and but common to eſtabliſh the lawfulneſs; only they are enforc'd with the weight of Authority; I am not ſatisfy'd beyond all ſcruple, that I ſhall not ſin againſt God in obeying Man; yet the Arguments from God's Law in Scripture, Nature, and the Reaſon of the thing would ballance my Judgment, did not that inartificial Argument interpoſe, the Judgment of many Learned and Reverend

Reverend Men, the Judgment of the Publick Conscience as of late it loves to be call'd. How shall I steer in this Case?

*Ans.* 1. The highest deference is to be made to *the Publick Judgment of Authority, and the Private Judgment of the Learned*; and I am obliged to suspect my own Judgment, and Reason, when it runs counter to theirs; and proceed with the greatest Caution and Impartiality, in forming my Sentiments and Arguments, and beware of Pride and Obstinacy; give a full testimony of my Humility and willingness to be informed, and use all possible means for that purpose.

2. 'Tis a very unsafe resolution of this Case, which I find in the Reverend and Judicious Dr. *Saunderson, Better obey doubtingly, than disobey doubtingly*; as allowing a less Sin to avoid a greater. For the Apostle, *Rom.* 14. *ult.* determines, that to act doubtingly is a Sin, immediately against Conscience, mediately against God. For since Conscience suspects the Act to be a Sin against God, yet admits it against its own sense, 'tis all one to it as if it were really a Sin against God, though perhaps it be not. The Act is against the supposed Authority of God, which at present the Conscience takes to be real, therefore this distemper of Conscience is as real Rebellion against God, as if it acted against the cleerest Light imaginable. For apparent and real to Conscience are all one, though not in themselves.

The Law of God in General, makes Sin and Duty, but not immediately to me in particular, whilst I am inculpably ignorant of it: Promulgation being essential to the obligatorineſs of a Law. Except it be so publish'd that none without their fault can be ignorant of it, they are without fault

in the violation of it. The next and immediate ground of the binding of a Law, is the apprehenſion and conviction of Conſcience, that it is impoſed by juſt Authority, with an intention to bind as a Law; or that it is a Law obligatory in its own Nature. Not that Laws ſtand or fall by the Judgment of Conſcience, as if Conſcience's judging them to be or not be Laws, gave or depriv'd them of their Obligatory Power; but that if there be ſufficient light to make it out to Conſcience (not wittingly and willingly prejudic'd and blinded) that this is, or is not, the will of the Lawgiver, ſupreme or ſubordinate; accordingly it is, or is not, obliged to receive and own this as Law. For if it be clear to any rational conſideration what the Legiſlators Mind is, with his intention to bind to obſervance; this is a ſufficient Promulgation, and doth immediately found the Obligatorineſs to us. In ſhort an unknowable Law binds none; becauſe not to be, and not to be known or knowable, is to us all one. But as ſoon as known, the Law binds the knower. For as Dr. *Saunderſon* well determines, *The preſent Light in the Mind for the time being, is the next and immediate Rule of Conſcience; though not the ſupreme and adequate. And if this Light be derived from, and conformable to its prime and higheſt Rule, the Will of God revealed in Nature or Scripture,* in acting according to it, 'tis a good and right Conſcience; but bad when acting againſt its Light and Sentiments, though they be erroneous, *i. e.* contrary to the revealed mind of God. For an erring Conſcience hampers and entangles a Man, though it really oblige not; becauſe the Man judges that really to be the Mind of God, which is indeed an Error, though to him unknown ſo to be. Finally acting againſt an erring Conſcience is formally evil, though

thongh materially good. Acting according to an erroneous Conſcience, is formally good, but materially evil. Acting againſt a well informed Conſcience both materially and formally evil. Therefore that a Man may act without preſent and future rebuke of Conſcience, both his Light and his Act muſt be according to Rule. For then only 'tis both materially and formally Good, and except it be both, 'tis not acceptable to God; except it be both, the Man is not (though he may fanſie himſelf to be) really Innocent.

3. Where therefore both to obey and diſobey is queſtionable, a Man muſt not ſin againſt his Conſcience, doubting about the matter commanded, to avoid ſining againſt his Conſcience, doubting about the Authority commanding. For both are carefully to be eſchewed; but,

1. If the Command require not preſent obſervance, but permit a ſuſpence for a ſeaſon, a Man muſt diligently uſe all means, with all ſpeed and readineſs of Mind, to get his doubts one way or other reſolved, out of the revealed Will of God, which is the Rule of Conſcience. For that which ties Conſcience muſt looſe it, or 'tis faſt for ever. As it has a Rule to bind, ſo it muſt have a Rule to unbind it. Pretended Conſcience without Rule is but Conceit: Conſcience againſt Rule, Corruption.

2. If no time be allow'd for ſuſpence, or if in the uſe of the utmoſt means no Reſolution can be obtain'd; a Man muſt quietly and patiently ſubmit to the Penalty. To ſuffer though for an erring Conſcience is no ſin, if the beſt have been done to direct it aright; but 'tis always a ſin to act againſt Conſcience, whether reſolv'd or doubting, as an evident and impudent affronting the real or ſuppoſed

poſed Authority of God, owned by Conſcience. If then the Authorities and Powers ſet over thee be good, and command Lawful things, thou muſt be ſubject in Active Obedience; elſe thou ſinneſt both againſt God and the King, and thy Conſcience too, if it know them to be ſuch. If the Supreme Magiſtrates be Erroneous, Heretical, Wicked, Tyrannical, thou muſt be ſtill ſubject, in Active Obedience to their Lawful Commands, in Paſſive to their Unlawful. To a Tyrant with Title, both in Body and Mind. To a Tyrant without Title, in Body. For thy Mind and Heart muſt follow the Title and Right though thy outward Man be enſlaved to the Uſurpation. Subjection then is abſolutely indiſpenſible to all Powers whatſoever. Even as 'tis in the caſe of Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants; which therefore are together with Prince and People, *&c.* comprehended under one general Name in the *Fifth Command*, and the Duties of the Inferiours under the common notion of *Honour*. That we may rationally carry the particular Inſtances of that Honour from any one ſort to all the reſt reſpectively, *mutatis mutandis*. And poſſibly this may be one reaſon of St. *Peter's* ſubjoyning the Duties of Servants immediately after thoſe of Subjects, 1 *Epiſt.* 2. 13. He requires ſubmiſſion to Kings, *&c.* 1. *For the Lord's ſake.* 2. *As the Will of God*, ver. 15. 3. *accounting this a well doing, which* 4. *will ſilence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men.*

*Then that Servants be ſubject with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but even froward Maſters*, as 1. *Thank-worthy.* 2. *An exerciſe of Conſcience toward God*, ver. 19. *though they ſuffer wrongfully:* And 3. *Honourable, though 'tis no honour to bear buffetings for Faults*, ver. 20. 4. *Acceptable to God.* 5. *A thing to*

*which*

*which Christians are called. 6. A piece of Conformity to Christ*, ver. 20. These are Precepts plain enough, and as strongly enforced with Argument, that a Man had need to be secure that he have an ample and clear demonstration of a release, from the obligation of them, if he intend not to violate his Conscience, in a non-observance of them. From Servants, parity, nay superiority of Reason will carry the Rule to Subjects, in as much as the benefit of the Publick is a more noble and necessary end, than that of a Private Family, and the neglect thereof more fatal and dangerous, issuing in Blood, Ruin and Confusion.

And now seeing Laws so strict and severe are imposed upon Inferiours by God, necessitating their obedience; a singular Prudence, Tenderness and Conscience is required in Superiours as they respect their own Salvation, to see that they impose nothing by their Authority, that may intangle Men in Sin or Snares, as understanding that they are only Lords over their outward Man, not their Consciences, and that compulsion to Sin renders the Compeller a Principal, and therefore if he reform not lyable to a great share of the *Damnation*. However the Subject Party may with a good Conscience obey, (as in paying unreasonable Taxes) where the Supreme does not maintain a good Conscience in commanding, but grievously sins both against Man and God.

I have made a large Excursion, (if that be not an impertinent Word, in so pertinent a case) 1. To obviate a Slander, as though we generally entertain'd odd and unsound Principles, contrary to the Duty of Subjects. 2. To direct the tenderest part of Man, in the tenderest point of general and present concernment. 3. To correct the unsound

and

and unsafe Principles of two Extremes, 1. Of some, who needlessly to advance Authority, do too much debase Conscience. 2. Of others who in an ungrounded deference to Conscience, too much depreciate and depress Authority. I heartily subscribe to the Doctrine of *Rom.* 13. in the full latitude of its sence, and readily acknowledge, that *Rom.* 14. follows after it; but must not deny that the one as well as the other is part of Canonical Scripture, of the Christian Law, of perpetual Obligation, nor affirm that one is inconsistent with, and abrogates the other.

The chief Exercise of Conscience towards Men is towards the chief of Men. God's Vicegerents on Earth may claim the first respect from his Vicegerent in our Souls; but must not engross all entirely. We in Conscience are obliged to a further Duty to Inferiours and Equals, nay even Enemies; in all things to seek their good, that's *Righteousness*, in nothing to do them hurt, that's *Innocency*: In every thing to please them for their good to Edification, *Rom.* 15. 1, 2, 3. that's *Perfection.* 'Tis true, I am a Devil, if I humour Men in their Lusts, indulge them in their Impieties and Sensualities: A Dog if I fawn upon and flatter them in their Extravagances, for my own ends. A senceless unprofitable Block, if I be altogether unconcern'd. My first care must be, *not to lead them into Sin or Temptation*; my next, *to induce them to love and practise Goodness*; alway having an Eye at their Temporal Good as well as Spiritual, though this mainly, else shall I violate a Divine Law, *Gal.* 6. 10. and therefore violate my Innocency and Conscience, and therefore my Comfort. I am obliged to give no offence to *Jew*, *Gentile*, nor the *Church of God*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. Not to put a stumbling-block or occasion

occasion of falling in my Brother's way, *Rom.* 14. 13. and a most dreadfully severe Sanction urges and enforces this Law against Offences, *Matth.* 18. 7.

By Scandal or Offence to Men, I do not mean what meerly tends to displease, but to defile: *Words, or Deeds, or Omissions, inducing others to Sin, either by acting against the Law of God and Conscience, or forbearing to do their Duty.* The World is at such a pass, that a Man can do nothing but 'twill displease, and even Professors of the highest form in their own Imaginations, (who therefore should be more candid and æquanimous) bitterly storm and censure others, who will not both against their Reason and Conscience please them, in their unreasonable humours. This is not to be valued at all. Mine own Light and Reason must be the Principle to guide my Conscience, according to the Rules of God's Word, in the choice of such *Methods of pleasing Men for their good to Edification*, Rom. 15. 1. (which by God's Grace I will endeavour) that I may not be one of the *branded Men-pleasers*, Gal. 1. 10. *and plague my own Soul for ever by pleasing another for his hurt, and to his Damnation.* If any Man think to impose his Judgment, Fancy, or Humour upon me, as the guide of my Conscience herein, he really scandalizes me. If he do not convince me out of the Will of God, which is the sole Rule of Conscience, he lays a stumbling-block before me, to induce me to sin, meerly that I may gratifie his Imperiousness, Pride, and Capriciousness. I will keep my way, and follow my Light and my Rule; if any be displeased with it, let them bark on, and bite too, it hurts me not. I'll give away my Goods, and my Labours, and my Liberty, yea and even my Life, as far as I can, with a good Conscience, to please, so as spiritually to profit; but

but give away my Light, my Rule, my Conſcience, I will not, I dare not, I cannot. 'Tis a double ſcandal giv'n firſt to me, when Men would thus Biaſs me, to a blind Servitude, unto their Wills; another to them, when in a fond aſſentationſneſs, I become a Pander to their laſcivient Humours, and imperious Imaginations. My Soul is of a more noble Extraction and Temper, than to debaſe it ſelf, to the turn-skin trade of a *Paraſite*, like a Serpent, with the ſame Tongue to lick and kill, or Great *Alexander*'s Miſs, who was fed with nothing but Poyſons that her kiſſes might be deleterious and Murder him. No lighter would my Crime be ſhould I violate my Conſcience, in being a pleaſer of Man rather than God.

Neither therefore in this nor any other way will I ſcandalize my Brother knowingly, nor muſt he exerciſe that Tyranny over my Conſcience, as to give other Law to it, beſides what God hath preſcribed in Nature or Scripture. My Practice ſhall be at his Devotion, as far as it doth not intrench upon my duly regulated Judgment, and wary will I be, that no unweighed Sentiments arreſt my Mind, and miſguide my Conſcience. I'll have an Eye, and an Ear, and a Heart open to receive all Truth freely, without Prejudice or Partiality, and this from any hands whatever, examining and proving all things, as fully as the infirmity of my intellect will permit. But a ſlavery to the Opinions of Men againſt the balance of mine own clear and diſtinct Reaſonings I abhor.

'. I will not do any thing which is every way indifferent, if it be likely in it ſelf, or be found by experience of a tempting Nature and Tendency, If any Man, either through the quality of my Act, or the power of my Example, in matters of that

that nature, be drawn into Sin; or if it be very probable that he will, upon such inducements, either transgress the Law of God, or imitate me with a doubting Conscience; here will I freely forbear the use of my Liberty, to prevent his Sin, that I may not make it my own by Participation; but then I must not omit any known Duty, nor commit any known Sin my self, though possibly it might prevent his Sin. For I must not venture my own Soul by dishonouring God, to preserve ano-

*Do Evil, that Good may come*, Rom. 3. 8.

2. But if in indifferent things, my Liberty be determined, as by the command of a Lawful Superiour, I am in a greater strait. For not to obey the Magistrate in Lawful things is a Sin; and by my Practice to induce my weak Brother to Sin, in imitating me, is also a Sin; What Rule has my Conscience in this Perplexity? It must be considered,

1. That my weak Brother's forbearance to obey, in a lawful thing is a Sin against God, though not his Conscience; and therefore my forbearance will edifie him in Sin against the Law of God, that commands Obedience, although it prevent the Sin against his Conscience; and the error of this cannot null the Sin against that. So that forbear or not forbear I scandalize him, in the one really, in the other putatively; when he acts against his Conscience he thinks he sins against God in the matter done, but does not; in disobeying Authority he sins against God, yet thinks it not. In this he sins immediately against God, because he disobeys God's civil Vicegerent in Publick, in the other he sins mediately against God, because he disobeys his Spiritual Vicegerent in Private. Now

I conceive that my way here is to do my Duty in obeying the Magistrate, wherein I sin not, whereas I doubly sin if I do not. 1. Against the Law of Subjection and Obedience, ingaging me to the Magistrate. 2. The Law of Charity that requires me not to scandalize my Brother. If to gratifie his scrupulosity I forbear, I do certainly know that he sins in disobeying. But 'tis only an accidental scandal may or may not happen, that he should be emboldned by my Example, to act against his Conscience.

To throw this off the Stage, enter Christian Liberty; which to restrain is Sin, though by a Person in Authority, having Laws under him.

*Ans.* True, but then be sure that it be indeed Christian Liberty, least asserting it forfeit and lose your civil and corporal Liberty. Now because a right understanding and use of Christian Liberty hath a special influence into Comfort and Peace of Conscience. Let's a little consider it.

Let it be heedfully observed, that true Christian Liberty doth not consist meerly in the indifferent use or omission of things not commanded nor forbidden, but in the *release of Conscience from an obligation to do or omit some things, under pain of Damnation.* Thus are we set at Liberty from the rigour of the Law or Covenant of Works, which required perfect, personal and perpetual Obedience, upon peril of Death. The Covenant of Grace doth not disoblige from such obedience, but from the peril of Death, though we come short, provided we act sincerely. This is the main of our Christian Liberty. *Not a freedom to do or not do, but a freedom from Penalty, upon an easier Condition.* And this is all our Hope, Comfort, and Salvation.

Under

Under the Jewish Law were included many *Ceremonials*, things in their own nature neither Good nor Evil; yet that Law made the omission of them Sin, exposing to Damnation. Christ by his Gospel hath set us at Liberty. How? What, to do or omit them at Pleasure? No such matters. For then 'twere lawful to Sacrifice, to keep the Passover, to Circumcise, *&c.* as well as forbear. No, the Liberty granted us must be doubly distinguish'd.

1. Into *Natural* and *Adventitious*.

The Indifferency of the use or omission of Lawful things, is a part of Natural not Adventitious Liberty, which understand thus.

Some things which were in their own Nature lawful to be used, or not used, God determined on one side, by positive Law, under the *Mosaical Dispensation:* But over and above there were things made the matter of positive Laws, which would never have entred into the Imaginations of Men, had not the first notices thereof come from God. Who could ever have thought of such a thing as Circumcision, *&c.* had not the first Injunction thereof proceeded from Heaven. Our Natural Liberty did consist in a freedom from that, and like Yoaks. But not in an indifferency to use or not use them. So then, by the Law of our Native Liberty, we may use or not use some things without Sin; there's an indifferency on both sides; as to take up a Straw or let it alone, *&c.* Yet also the indifferency does naturally lie only on one side, in other things as to continue the Body in its Natural State, without Circumcision. But God for wise and holy purposes having abridged the *Jews* of this Natural Liberty for a season; when the reason of those Laws ceased, was pleas'd to abolish them, where-

by we became reinstated in our natural Right and Freedom, which otherwise those Laws, when devulged to us, would have taken from us. Now the reason of imposing those Laws was to succour the infirmity of the *Jews* in two things.

1. In *Faith*, of which nature are all the things impos'd which have a Typical significancy, as *Sacrifices*, &c.

2. In *Manners*, of which sort are all that have a moral significancy, as *Meats*, *Washings*, &c.

But now *Jesus* the substance of those Typical Shadows, being come in the Flesh, the Laws concerning them were *ipso facto* vacated; and by the more plentiful effusion of his Spirit of Truth and Grace, thorowly furnishing Men for exact Moral Goodness, he took away the necessity both of remembring us thereof, and seeking it out by *Washings*, *Circumcision*, &c. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as a compleat Law from the Spirit of Truth, doing the one more sufficiently than a few dumb signs; and the New Nature communicated by the Spirit of Grace, together with Christ's Merit all-sufficiently doing the other. This is the Liberty I call

*Adventitious*, not that 'tis new but newly given; not that we never had it, but had it restor'd, after an interruption. During the restraint 'twas sin to use it. To Christ we owe, that now we may again use it without sin, as at first before God abridged it; and this is that we call *Christian Liberty* in things indifferent as contradistinct to *Natural*. For Christ as Redeemer did not purchase our Natural Liberty, but gave it as Creator: 'Tis only the Adventitious that we enjoy, by vertue of his Merit; 'tis only this

that

that we are entrusted with the Preservation and Vindication of, by the New Testament.

2. Liberty is either *Positive* or *Negative*.

The former consists in an indifferency to act this, or that, or the other way at pleasure. The latter in being loos'd from the obligation to act. That which *Christ* the *Redeemer* bestows, is chiefly of this latter sort. We are disobliged, loosed from the Ceremonial Bands wherewith the *Jews* were tyed, so as we need not to act as they, under that *Oeconomy*. 'Tis no sin to us to omit; incurrs no Penalty. And this freedom from the guilt and punishment due for Omission, is indeed a privilege, which constitutes the very essence of the Covenant of Grace, in one part of it. The tenor thereof in its Negative part being this, viz. *Thy Imperfections, Failures, Omissions, shall not be imputed as Sins effecting thy Damnation.* This for want of a better Word I call *Negative Liberty*. Although thou do not Circumcise, do not Sacrifice, do not Eat a Paschal Lamb, do not Wash, &c. thou dost not sin, thou shalt not be cut off from thy People, from my Heaven. This and none other in these indifferent Matters is Christian Liberty, the Purchase and Gift of Jesus Christ our Lord.

So that except Magistrates do again introduce the Ceremonial Law in whole or part, they do not at all touch upon Christian Liberty, but Natural only, which they are allow'd to restrain in civil things, upon just occasions, as is evident from not only Scripture and Reason, but the practice of all Nations, and Ages, and Families. For would it not be sweet to hear a Child or Servant reply to their Superiours, commanding them to light a Candle, &c. *'Tis not lawful for you to restrain*

*my Liberty. Had you not commanded I might have obey'd, but your imposing has made it unlawful.* Oh dainty, delicate Reasoning! Yet such as some fob off their Consciences withal. 'Tis the same thing, when they command in the Circumstantials of Divine Worship, &c. *I charge you to be present at Eight of the Clock, Morning and Evening, to joyn in Family Prayer,* &c. *No, had you not impos'd a time 'twould have been lawful, now 'tis not.* Away with this Foolery.

In Civils then, and Circumstantials of Spirituals the Magistrate hath a Power, not meerly directive but legislative, to whose Laws all are obliged to be subject in Conscience of the Divine Law, the Fifth Command.

Now suppose the Magistrate by a settled Law have enjoyned some things, in their own nature indifferent, which, 1. Induce some to act against their doubting Consciences, for fear of Penalty; whereas. 2. Others are well satisfied in the lawfulness of their Obedience, and accordingly do actually obey; but some may be induc'd by their example to obey with a hesitant Conscience. What is advisable?

1. Though the greatest tenderness ought to be exercised towards Mens Consciences, and singular Prudence be requisite in Governors to direct them in the choice of Laws, that they may obtain with the greatest inoffensiveness; yet will not Mens being scandaliz'd be a sufficient evidence of the sinfulness of a Law, or ground to reverse it, unless the scandal be very general, among the best, and wisest, or something in the mattter or sanction of the Law be at least a moral cause thereof. For what can so politickly or wisely be devis'd which Men of soft Heads, and hot Hearts, may

may not make occasion of Sin; that there would never be an end of making and repealing Laws, if Men can but pretend scandal, and who beside God knows what is pretence meerly, what not?

2. If fear of the Penalty occasion the Scandal, from a Law about Indifferents; those are not faultless who have not proportion'd the Penalty to the Crime, an indifferent tolerable pain to an indifferent fault.

3. Yet to be scandaliz'd or act against my Conscience, for fear of suffering, is a Sin, the cause or inducement whereof will not excuse though it may extenuate it. Will it avail a Man to say, *I violated my Conscience through Fear*, any more than *I vitiated my Neighbours Wife through Lust*; when the Fear and Lust themselves are Sins as well as those they introduce. Therefore the Rule is, *Suffer rather than Sin.*

4. Either 'tis evident *de facto*, that some are scandaliz'd through a Law, or Example, or 'tis morally certain 'twill follow; or probable; or only possible. This last and probability, except the presumption be strong, are not to be regarded.

1. If the Law cannot be revers'd without prejudice to publick order, nor a dispensation obtain'd, Men must not defame Laws, but submit. For the Law does not necessitate Sin, there's an outgate by suffering. Yet if the Law be needless, 'tis the first duty in the use of lawful means, to endeavour its Abrogation, or get a Dispensation, which if not feisible, I say with *Calvin*, *No other Mandate is given us, but of obeying and suffering.*

*Instit. lib. ult. c. ult. §. 31. med.*

2. To obey the Magistrate is a duty upon an affirmative Precept, which not binding *ad semper*, if my obeying induce my Brother to Sin, out of tenderness, I will suspend for a season, though I suffer; in the interim endeavouring

1. To give him satisfaction in the lawfulness of my Practice, and the necessity of my Duty, which if it convince not,

2. To demonstrate that my Practice, enforces not his Imitation, since he may forbear and undergo the Penalty, as I have been willing to do for his sake.

3. To let him understand that there may be danger of scandalizing my Superiors, *i. e.* irritating them to wrath, and to exercise greater severities, both against me as a Sinner against my own Conscience, which is satisfy'd of my duty to obey, even whilst I suspend; and also against him and others as obstinate, and unsatisfiable, Wranglers, and disobedient to just Authority without just Reason, the matter of the Law being indifferent, *ex hypothesi*. This Consideration has weight, we both hear and feel it, and may at least balance the alledgement, that my compliance will edifie the Magistrate in the sin of Persecution.

Lastly, If notwithstanding he continue obstinate, since to me 'tis clear, that only Fancy, not Reason, bottoms his disobedience; I will protest against his Pertinacy, earnestly dehort him from acting against his pretended Conscience, which indeed is only blind Opinion, return to my Duty, and leave him to the Law.

For although my Charity may induce me for a season to be willing to suffer for his sake, yet my Conscience will not permit me to do it always.

Not

Not that I pretend Conscience to prevent suffering; but because active Obedience, where I can is the primary intention of God in the Law that subjects me to the Magistrate, and therefore the first and main office of Conscience. Passive Obedience is not the intention of the Lawgiver at all, in the Law as a Law, as being not enjoyn'd therein; 'tis only the enforcement of it, as a remedy against its violation; the hedge about it. 'Twill be no plea before God, to justifie my breach of his Laws, that I was willing to be damn'd; but an aggravation of my sin, that I chose so great an Evil as the Punishment, rather than submission to so great a Good as the Duty. I am bound to suspend my Obedience, if I can, to prevent my Brothers Sin; but not finally to deny my Obedience and therein sin my self, to prevent his suffering, that is, damn my Soul, to save his Skin.

Wilt thou then, O my Soul, herein follow Christ, and perfectly subjugate thy self to that noble Law of *Universal Love* to thy Brother, whom thou hast seen, that the immortal God whom thou hast not seen may not charge thee with *Hypocrisie* in thy pretensions of Love to himself. Live thou must, thou shalt, in true Love to thy Neighbour, or renounce all Love to thy self. Profess and practise, as thou lovest thy Purity, thy Peace, thy Salvation, a sincere and cordial, not only Subjection and Honour, but Affection to thy Prince, Benevolence, Charity, Beneficence to all Men, out of Conscience to God, as thou wilt answer it before his Judgment-seat. Whatever thou wouldst have others to do to thee, do thou to them; what thou wouldst not have them to do to thee, do not to them. Make their case thine, and act toward them as thy self.

*Do good to all, but especially the Houshold of Faith.* Seek their Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal Welfare, as thine own; and do not think to patronize thy regardlessness of them, by a careless sluggish unconcernedness in thine own nearest concerns; but elevate thine affectionate care for thy self to the utmost degree of Perfection, on purpose, that according to the second great Command, thou mayst have a more excellent measure and rule, whereby to square thy affectionate regard of others.

But 'tis not enough, O my Soul, to partake of a Moral, thou must aspire after a *Divine Nature, as well as escape, or fly from the Corruption in the World in Lust, or Concupiscence,* 2 Pet 2. 4. *To love thy self into Sobriety or Prudent self Government, to cloath thy self with a Robe of Righteousness and Mercy in thy dealings with Men,* is not enough, is not the full and adequate Doctrine and Duty taught by the *Grace of God which brings Salvation,* Titus 2. 11. There must be superadded not only a *denying Ungodliness* so as to crucifie it; but a *living Godly,* leading a Religious Life towards God in Love, Faith, Fear, Honour, Universal Acknowledgment, out of Conscience. For what Conscience in dealing well with Men, and ill with God? that is with the Subjects fairly, and not with the Soveraign? What Conscience in breaking the first Article betwixt God and Man, which is to give him the sole command in his House, thy Heart that living Temple, which is the sum of the First Commandment? What Conscience to dwell in his House and pay him no Rent? No external Acknowledgment and Worship, in Publick, in thy Family, in thy Closet? the sum of the

the Second Command. What Conscience whilst tender of thy own Name to be regardless of Gods? forbid in the Third Command. What Conscience in stealing time from God's reserved part, when he allows thee so much beside? the Fourth Command violated. Be never so sober, just, free, kind to Man-ward, if thou respect not God, O my Soul, thou hast no Conscience. For where there's no *Godliness*, there can be no *Conscience*. Oh, make it thy first and main business to approve thy self to God. Thou canst never be true to thy self or Man if thou be a Traytor to God. Thou hast no greater assistance in thy dutifulness to Men, than a due regardfulness of God. Thou canst have no better evidence of a due regardfulness of God, than thy conscientious dutifulness to Men. Thou forfeit'st the reputation of thy Religiousness towards God, if thou be not Righteous towards Man, and of thy *Righteousness*, if not *Religious*. Like *Hippocrates*'s Twins, these are born and act, and sicken, and die together. That's the 4th ingredient of the Psalmist's Character; he upheld universal Innocency and Integrity of Conscience.

---

## CHAP. VII.

*The Subject of Comfort, Publickly Spirited,&c. True Christianity, &c.*

5. THis Holy Man was of a Publick Spirit, living under a Catholick sence of, and care for the common concerns of the Church of God. Lamenting its Miseries, *ver.* 5, 6. longing and praying for its redemption from them by the Power

Power and Justice of God, *ver.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 20. and encouraging his own and its hopes thereof, by a serious reflection upon the Divine Attributes, *ver.* 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11. Providences, *ver.* 12, 13. and his own particular experience, *ver.* 17, 18, 19, 21. withal by a Prophetick Spirit foretelling it, *ver.* 14, 15, 23. all which are plain in the Psalm, and plain demonstrations of a Heart enlarged in its desires, and endeavours for Publick Good. A good Soul is not well at ease when the Servants of God are ill at ease. The Sufferings of the Church are made its own by a sympathizing Spirit, which is afflicted in all its Afflictions, and cannot enjoy Prosperity, or it self in Contentation, when God's Children are groaning under the Cross: Mourns with Mourning, Rejoyces with rejoycing *Sion*, and uses its interest in Heaven, to work upon the Bowels of the ever-blessed Son of God, that he may demonstrate his tender Commiserations toward his own Members in Misery, by turning the course of his Providence. And that this is a proper method to Comfort we see, *Isai.* 66. 10, 11. *Rejoyce ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her, rejoyce for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck and be satisfied, with the Breasts of her Consolations, that ye may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her Glory.* God had a People, a Heritage, which though *Afflicted and broken in pieces* here, *ver.* 5. yet he would not cast off nor forsake, either in respect of *Affection* or *Communion*, *ver.* 14. So neither must we. For 'tis by Vertue of our Union and Communion with that Body, and its Head, that all those comfortable Spirits and Influences are derived to us, which refresh and revive us. I confess 'tis through our internal and spiritual

ſpiritual Confederation and Fellowſhip; but he that values and receives benefit by this, cannot deſpiſe and vilifie the External. Hence our Pſalmiſt here, as a Member vitally joined to the Body, and partaking of a common Senſe, does not only comfort himſelf and it, with the conſideration of the inviolableneſs of that Union and Communion which was of a ſpiritual Nature, *ver.* 14. nor only reflects upon thoſe external Ligaments and Bonds which ty'd together ſo numerous a People, into one ſingle *Heritage* or *Church*; but alſo was grievouſly afflicted for thoſe external breakings in pieces, rents and diſunion of parts, though involuntary, which were the fruit of the outward Violence and Rage of Perſecutors. So ſhould we. But then, Oh what Affliction would have rent his tender Heart, in the view of thoſe voluntary tearing in pieces the Seamleſs Coat of Chriſt, the Diviſions and Breaches we make amongſt our ſelves. Thoſe Fractions were only ſome kind of diſſolution of their Civil, Political Union, ours of the Eccleſiaſtical; and Wounds are moſt dangerous in the moſt noble Parts. State Factions are not more to be dreaded, than thoſe of the Church, becauſe theſe have more immediate reſpect to the Soul and God.

Lamentable are the Miſeries of a Civil War, where Thouſands Born, Bred up, Nouriſhed by one common Mother, Brethren by Stock, Blood, Condition, Cohabitation, Memberſhip of the ſame Body Politick, perhaps of one Name and Kindred, and Family, of the ſame Body Myſtical, the Church; Blind, and Dumb, and Deaf to the Cries, and Shreeks, and Wounds, and Groans, and Deaths of their own proper Limbs; in a barbarous drunken rage tear off their own Skin, Fleſh,

Flesh, and Bones; rive open their very Hearts to let out Spirit, Life, Strength, Soul; hurl one another down to Hell under their Sin, in a deluge of Blood, and worry themselves by piecemeal into eternal Damnation. And are the Church Digladiations in the Christian World less deplorable, when those, whose respite from everlasting Burnings, cost no less than the Blood of God, who are denominated from that most venerable Name, wash'd in the same Laver of Regeneration, Members of the same Spiritual Body, privileged with the same most excellent Gospel, and Covenants of Promise, and would every one be ready to tear out his Heart, that should dare to tell them, that they shall not each possess the blessedness of an unspeakably glorious Heaven, where therefore, as in a Center, they must meet, if their hopes fail not: When these, I say, who thus concenter and agree in their Titles, Royalties and Expectations, are so far from combining in the common profession and practice of Unity, Love, Peace, Goodness, Vertue, Godliness, Brotherly kindness, Charity, as to grind one another into Atoms, bite and devour one anothers Hearts, by bloody Animosities, Reproaches, Railings, Revilings, Censures, Uncharitableness, Cursings, Excommunicatings, Fines, Imprisonments, Murderings, Massacrings, for things extrinsecal, and foreign to their holy Profession, recommended in the Mosaical, Prophetical, Evangelical and Apostolical Writings. As if God had not delivered Precepts enough to guide Men to Heaven, ever Party must have new of its own to torture Mens Consciences, doubting that there are not Sins enough to damn Men, unless we by our whimsies make large additions to the sum,

discovering

discovering thereby how much we are affraid, that those, who otherwise would securely tread in the Paths of Life, and gain the Crown of Glory, should not stumble and fall upon our new created Blocks, and thereby precipitate themselves into Hell. For what else is the meaning of our *unwritten Traditions*, *unwritten Canons*, *unwritten Offices*, *unwritten Orders*, and an hundred more by the by's; Tricks, and Snares, and Trains, and Traps made to help the Devil more certainly to catch enough. Is not the Holy Word of God, the Scripture, in its Rules and Laws, too oft, too much, too foully transgress'd, but the Mouth of Hell must be gagg'd and rack'd wider with new devices, that it may be capacious enough to receive the numberless numbers that we resolve to send thither by man-made Sins, as if it were in despite of God. And least our self-devised Engins should fail of effecting this, and a poor quivering trembling Conscience, that looks asquint at them should chance to preserve its Innocence and Allegiance to God, and its present Light, and Sentiments, by sliping out of or breaking through the Snare, and refusing to wound it self to eternal Death with the Ponyard we put into its hands; we must jog and thrust home, and drive on its slow and cautious pendulous Arm, by the violence of such severe indispensible Sanctions, so strictly look'd after, so rigorously executed, and all under a bold pretence of Divine Warrant, that if Men have any thing of Nature, Sense, and Commiseration to their own Flesh, their dearest Yoke-fellows, their pretty tender innocent Babes, they must be cruelly enforc'd to determine to be damn'd for them, or kill their Hearts by dying before their Eyes, under as many Agonies as ingenious Malice

can

can invent, and this perhaps a thouſand times over, beſide the bequeathing them to the ſame or more miſerable Fortune, and all this is doing God good Service. As if the Lord that bought Mens Souls to eaſe them, *Matth.* 11. 29, 30. had done it only to ſell them again to the moſt bloody butchering Fiends to torment them. And God who with ſo much ſeverity prohibits Cruelty, Murder, Bloodſhed by his Laws, had laid in an exception, and given Commiſſion for this, to as many as can ſo diveſt all ſenſe and bowels of Humanity and Chriſtianity, as to judge none to be Men and Chriſtians but themſelves, and inveſt ſo much of *Wolf*, *Tyger*, *Dragon*, as to do the utmoſt to make all others *Proſelytes of the Gates of Hell*, like themſelves, when in the mean time Men with the greateſt impunity, may violate the nobleſt Ordinations of Heaven, or upon Proſecuon buy off or commute the Penance for a little Traſh and Dirt. Oh dear *Lord Jeſus!* how long, how long ſhall ſuch a Spirit Triumph and ride in Scarlet? How long ſhall they tear in pieces thy People and Heritage, under the Beaſts Skins wherewith they have cloathed them? Oh bleſſed Spouſe of Chriſt! How long muſt thou be affronted with the violence of ſuch beaſtly Ruffians, that under a diſguiſe pretend to be thy very ſelf, that they may the more ſecurely raviſh and deſtroy thee. The Wolf in the Lambs skin unſuſpectedly to devour it. A Beaſt with Horns like a Lamb, but a Voice like a Dragon, *Rev.* 13. 11.

Well, Chriſt's Servants are not *Wolves*, *Thorns*, and *Thiſtles*, *Matth.* 7. 15, 16. Profitable to none, hurtful to all, publick Curſes: But *Sheep*, *Vines*, *Fig-trees*, their Temper, their Behaviour, their

their Fruit altogether good, meek, gentle, ſweet, refreſhing, reviving, pleaſing, generally uſeful, publick Bleſſings, like their Maſter every way deſirable, grateful; all being better for them, none worſe, in Goods, good Name, Body or Soul, their Deſigns, their Principles, their Temper and Spirit, their Behaviour and Purpoſe, and Practice being the general benefit of Mankind, and the Church of God; eſpecially that wherein their Lines are fallen. They think it, they repreſent it, they endeavour further to make and preſerve it a goodly Heritage. If it hold the Head, if it uphold the main, if its eſtabliſhed Doctrine be truly Chriſtian, if its deſign be true goodneſs, if its Worſhip in the ſubſtance be Divine; They bleſs God for it, they cover its Blemiſhes, they bear with its Infirmities, they further its Ends, they endeavour to inlarge it, to adorn it with real Beauties, to vindicate it from Reproaches, to promote its Unity, Proſperity, Peace, Purity, Felicity; lament its Miſeries, Breaches, Corruptions, Defects, Deformities; but expoſe it, but defame it they dare not, they will not. This is a truly Catholick Spirit, proceeding in all its actings upon truly Catholick Principles: This and this only, when the risk of Partiality, Cenſoriouſneſs, Self-idolizing, Faction, Fury, Barbarouſneſs, Madneſs, Deviliſm is run will ſtand upon a ſecure baſis, and yeild a Man the bleſſed Fruits of Comfort, Joy, Peace, and Contentation.

But I muſt come out of the Clouds, and be plain: Therefore ſhall firſt direct what ought to be owned by a Publick Spirit; next what Principles will enable a Man to own what he ought.

1. Common

1. Common Humanity engages to be wellwishers to that general Nature which is diffused through all the Species, and love that in any Man which I honour in my self. All the Butcheries and Barbarities on Earth issue from Mens degeneracy from Humanity into a ferine or diabolical Nature. But since I am a Man nothing humane shall be foreign to my Cognisance, to my Compassion, to my Ear, to my Conscience. When the Vices of Persons give a check to my Bowels, the vertue of the Nature shall retrieve their yearning motions, and when I can see nothing in Men to engage, I will endeavour to imitate the best of Paterns in taking Arguments from my self. I will not so much regard their Conditions as their Capacities, and that in all their Possibilities. If this Nature be personally joined to God, why should not I be joined to it in Affection? Shall I tread that Man in the dirt who may shine as a Star in the Firmament of Glory? Shall a Companion of Angels and God himself, be worse dealt with than a Devil? May Heaven receive him and shall not my Heart? Is God so unkind to me as to give me an Example of brutishness to my own Nature? I must not be worse to him, than I would have him to me, were our circumstances changed; the measures I meet to him, shall I receive of God.

2. Christianity next, both renders a man more meet, and lays upon me a further bond, to desire, endeavour, and effect his good. The honour of the Name, the power of the Thing. The famed Mr. *Fox* could never deny an Alms asked in the Name of Christ: but above all the Eternal Father never will, *Joh.* 14. 13, 14. and 15. 16 and 16. 23, 24. But the Nature, the Life, the Power of Christianity

Christianity is a Thing incomparable; the highest communication of Divine Goodness, issuing from the lowest condescension of infinite grace. Christ the God of Wisdom dwelling in our Nature by the Holy Ghost, the God of love, and in our hearts by Faith, to root and ground us in Love. Oh the height, depth, length, breadth, of the love of Christ! an Hyperbole to our knowledge, infinitely surpassing, shooting above it, that we may be FILLED WITH ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD. Oh Mystery above all Mysteries! Oh Grace above all Grace! The Height of most incomprehensible Majesty, in the deepest humility of boundless Mercy, exalting poor degenerate man from the lowest Abyss of unspeakable misery, to the utmost sublimity of celestial Glory, in such an extensive amplitude, and fullness of all the richest blessings, spread abroad over the whole latitude of humane nature, having their spring from that everliving fountain of Eternal Love, and streaming in infinite varieties to the length of all eternity, with such accommodation and suitableness to every of our particular necessities, desires, hopes, as becomes a fruit of unparallel'd incomparable Wisdom and Grace. Oh unfathomable Love! thou hast even outdone thy self, and undone me, a man of an unclean heart, and lips for how shall such a poor weak polluted worm be ever able to conceive aright of thy unconceivable plenitude, be thankful for, and speak well enough of thy unspeakable magnitude; with a degree of Love and delight high enough, entertain thy unmeasurable sufficiency, sweetness, and satisfactory Perfection; or faithfully improve, and walk worthy of, thy unmatchably rich and glorious communications. The unsuitableness, the unanswerableness of my Spirit and practice will ruine me,

if by another aſtoniſhing Miracle of demiſſion, thou do not ſpread abroad thy quickening, confirming, thy ſanctifying and actuating influences throughout all the powers of my Soul; that in thine own ſtrength, I may rightly glorify thee. That is Chriſtianity in its cauſes; the Wiſdom, Love, and Grace of God, in Jeſus Chriſt: and its general Notion an elevation of Fallen Man to God. More particularly, Chriſtianity in the Theory is the Doctrine of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt; in the Practice 'tis covenanting and keeping Covenant with God. This is brief; inlarge your Thoughts thus: Chriſtianity is an undiſſembled acknowledgement, or owning and receiving Jeſus Chriſt, as the only Mediator betwixt God and man in a hearty Submiſſion to the terms of the Covenant of Grace, Repentance, Faith, and upright Obedience. It ſuppoſes Natural Religion, in an univerſal ſubjection to the Deity as Creator, Governour, and Owner of all. For if God had nothing to do with us nor we with him, there would be no need of a Mediator; ſo neither if there were no Sin. Hence it alſo ſuppoſes the Obligation of the Law of Nature, which is the Rule of Natural Religion and the guide of man in his natural ſubjection to God. It ſuppoſes alſo the Covenant of Nature (commonly called Works) with the violation of it which none could expiate but God-man. And it includes as moſt eſſential, the Covenant of Grace, and in ſpecial the New Edition thereof, (for the old is Judaiſm) *i. e.* the Goſpel exhibiting Jeſus Chriſt as already come, God in our Fleſh Teaching for our inſtruction, Commanding for our direction, Doing for our example and advantage, and Suffering in our room and ſtead, and for our Sin, *All things neceſſary for our Salvation*, hereby ſatisfying Divine Juſtice and meriting for us the Holy

Holy Ghoſt with his gifts, grace, pardon, peace and eternal glory, to be given us upon conditions and terms ſuitable to his own goodneſs, and our preſent ſtate; *viz.* Repentance toward God, for and from dead works that we might ſerve him the Living God; and Faith in Jeſus Chriſt accepting of, ſubmitting and committing our Souls to him in well doing, with all the fruits hereof, in Love, Meekneſs, Humility, Self-denial, Patience, Heavenly-mindedneſs, Watchfulneſs; in Summ, Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs, and Sobriety, to be wrought in us and exerciſed by us, through the Grace and Might of Chriſt which only makes them ſincere and ſound, and ſo acceptacle to God through Chriſt, who alone intercedes with God on the behalf of Man, for this end, as a Saviour [εἰς τὸ παντελὲς] to all perfection. Heb. 7. 25. This is the ſumm of Chriſtianity owned by ſome Profeſſionally only, by others Really alſo. But becauſe the reality of the Heart is only known to God, whereof he never made us the Judges, We muſt proceed ſolely upon the external Profeſſion, as far as it renders the other (real inward owning) credible. Now 'tis in reſpect of this credible owning of Chriſtianity, manifeſted by Profeſſion, that a Man becomes a member of the Catholick Church Viſible, has a right to all Ordinances, Baptiſm, Fellowſhip with a particular Church, the Lords Supper, and conſequently Miniſtry, Miniſterial and Fraternal Inſpection, &c.

1. There's no Vital Union, betwixt Jeſus Chriſt, and any particular Perſon, merely as a Member of a Particular Church, and under that Formality, but only as a Member of the Church Univerſal inviſible. For There's no union of Life but by unfeigned Faith, uncorrupt Love, which are inviſible things. Theſe make no Man a Member of a Particu-

lar Church actually, and *ipso facto*, though they give the first and truest right thereto; but of the Catholick they actually do: Nay the Visible profession of them though it give the right, yet does not actually invest in a particular Church, but does in the Universal Visible, and after it has been own'd by the Church in Baptism, we are not only Visible potentially, but seen and actually acknowledged Members of the Catholick Church Visible: yet not presently of a particular Church. Though Baptism be *in* a particular Church yet 'tis not *into* it, but the Universal. That which makes a Man a Member of a particular Church is only Actual Association with its consent explicit or implicit. Every one that is truly a Member of the Catholick Church Visible, and gives any credible evidence thereof, either explicit, or implicit, (as Mr. *Tho. Hooker* truly observes) and essays to joyn himself to a particular Church; upon that evidence, ought to be receiv'd to a participation of all Ordinances, and that particular Church cannot *de jure* deny its consent, but it betrays its trust and sins greatly both against the man, and Christ also. But then no man is saved under that Formality as a member of a particular Church merely, but only as he partakes of that common Christian Nature, which constitutes the Members of the Catholick Church; Though he sin Grievously, and without Repentance general or particular, may justly be damn'd, for neglect of joining in the Ordinances with some particular Church or other if he have opportunity.

*Consent without actual associating, does not constitute any a Member actually, but only potentially and virtually.*

2. No man is the Object of our special Love, as a Christian, merely because he is a Member of a particu-

particular Church: but only as a Member of the Church Universal, *i. e.* the particular Circumstances and Practices that confine, determine, and fix him as a Member, in this or that or the other Assembly, are not the first Ground and Foundation of my Obligation so to Love and do good to him, (although they may add to it) but only Christianity. And if any think that a Church Covenant, &c. engage to a more special regard; I answer, That is not, because they are a particular Society, so join'd nor as such merely, but because Christians. Else might the Congregation of Condemners here, *V.* 21, be really obliged to Love one another better than Gods People and Heritage, the Righteous and Innocent, whom they Persecuted, but I think 'tis undeniable, that every one is obliged by the Divine and Christian Law to love a *Good*, better than a *Bad* man, though Confederate with him, in never so strict and sacred bonds of Union and Association.

I grant that there is an act and fruit of Christian Love proper to Members of Particular Societies, as such, which cannot be extended to Christians at large, Unassociated: Or to Speak more Congruously. Since actual Coparticipation of God's Ordinances, is the Formal act of a Particular Church, as such, and this joynt Communion is an Act or Fruit of Christian Love, Depending upon a Condition which Christians are obliged to perform, but oft will and do suspend, though sometimes not without Sin; it follows that this Act of Love is not to be extended to those that do not observe the Condition. In short, the Condition is Consent. For Common Christianity, though it do oblige a Man to consent, to partake of those Ordinances indefinitely, with any true Church of real Christians; yet it does not confine him to this one

individual, of which I am a Member; but permits him a liberty to chuſe the beſt and fitteſt for his edification, and other conveniencies; yet not that neither, without the Advice and Direction of Chriſt's Officers, or wiſe judicious Chriſtians, or allowance, or connivance at leaſt of the ſupreme Powers Chriſtian, who are obliged to promote and countenance; yea and conſtrain Men by Law, to communicate in God's Ordinances, and by no means permit them to be Recuſants there. I ſay God's Ordinances in general, and as his; for as yet I do not deſcend to conſider them in this, or that or the other particular Mode, Dreſs, Habitude, or way of Adminiſtration. Now except other Circumſtances concur, no Man by me can regularly be forced to communion with me, though he may be exhorted to it. 'Tis not his Duty, but his Freedom, which I cannot conclude, though poſſibly the Magiſtrate may; he muſt determine it himſelf, at leaſt if the Publick Laws interpoſe not; and till he do it though he be in a remote capacity, to be the Object of this Love yet actually he is not the immediate Object of it, but potentially only. But if he think to hang off, and will not reſolve one way or other; I look upon it as part of the Magiſtrate's office, to take care that he do live in actual Fellowſhip, with ſome particular Congregation or other. And 'tis conformable to right Reaſon, that the Laws which eſtabliſh this among Chriſtians, ſhould determine men to that particular Society which lies in their Vicinity, *cæteris paribus*, not permitting them to ramble where they liſt, whereby the Law will be eluded: Yet do I not think that 'tis in the Magiſtrate's Power, to compel all the Neighbourhood to partici-

cipate

cipate in all Ordinances, whether qualified or no. There is a bar laid against this by an over-ruling former Law; *viz.* that of Christianity, which the English Liturgy owns.

*Exhortation before receiving the Communion, &c.*

3. The Consequence of all is, That Publick-Spiritedness ought to respect Goodness, and christian Goodness mainly, in abstraction from all Circumstances of Persons and Things; and that no Bonds of Relation, *&c.* should further engage our hearts than may be consistent with the general Obligation to own and honour our common Christianity. Thou art a confederate Member of a particular Church, and lookest upon thy self as obliged, with a more special Love to embrace the Christians with whom thou dost walk in Fellowship, I disallow it not; but can'st thou dote so much as to think, that thou mayst be a Heathen to all the world beside, and they such to thee. No all the Acts of Love which thou extendest to the Members of thy own society, are as thou hast opportunity, to be extended to all that really own Christianity, except only such as prerequire their consent, and those also upon occasion if they regularly desire it; and all in as true a degree of sincerity, (though not perhaps in as high a degree of intention,) as if they were of thine own particular combination. 'Tis madness to conceit that the particular obligations of Christianity, do or can null the General.

'Tis true some men are to be to us as *Heathens* and *Publicans*, but then it must be after a due and regular procedure against them, According to the tenor of that so prudent, so equitable, so Charitative Christian Law, *Matt.* 18. 15, 16, 17. But to paganize the whole world unseen, unheard, un-understood, undealt with, is a piece of Charity, which no Charity can Christianize.

Can I then, dare I condemn, unchriſten, unchurch the Chriſtians in *Africk*, in *Aſia* or *America*; or the *European* in *Greece*, and its Communion, *&c.* or the Proteſtants in *Germany*, *Hungary*, *Poland*, *Sweden*, *Denmark*, *Holland*, *France*, *&c.* or this little Univerſe, or diſtinct World, where I reſide? If I do I am worſe than an Infidel.

'Tis a Catholick Rule, *Gal.* 6. 10. *As we have opportunity let us do good to all Men, eſpecially to them who are of the Houſhold of Faith.* Here is a diſtribution of the whole World into two Claſſes. In ſome, community of Nature efflagitates our kindneſs, in others peculiarity of relation, as Houſholders with us. All theſe, not ſome only, muſt have ſomething ſpecial. What have I to do to make balks where God makes none? Heb. 13. 1. *Let Brotherly love continue.* 1 Pet. 2. 17. *Honour all Men, Love the Brotherhood, Fear God, Honour the King.* What is this Brotherhood? What? only the Members of that particular Society I am embodied with? Away, away, the Brotherhood comprehends all Chriſtians, is never ſo much as once in the New Teſtament reſtrained to a ſingle Congregation excluſively, when Love is commanded to it, or commended when extended to it. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 9, 10. *But as touching Brotherly Love ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your ſelves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it to all the Brethren which are in all* Macedonia, *but we beſeech you Brethren that ye abound more and more.* He is a Stranger to the Acts and Apoſtolical Writings that does not obſerve all Chriſtians every where called *Brethren*, even by thoſe who were not of the ſame particular Congregation, *Acts* 10. 23. and 11. 29. and 14. 2. and 15. 1, 3, 23, 32, 33, 40. and 16. 2, *&c.* I challenge all the World to give

but

but one Inſtance out of the Bible where Chriſtians of any particular Church, were not ſtiled and owned under the Name of Brethren, by any one or more Perſons of another Congregation, though of different Nations; nay where Chriſtians though not embodied (as they phraſe it) were not ſo called, as *Acts* 28. 14, *&c. All then that are Partakers of the ſame heavenly calling are holy Brethren*, Heb. 3. 1. And this Title is not at all given to Chriſtians with relation to a particular Church, but only the Catholick, and upon common Catholick grounds, and no other. Since then the whole Community of Chriſtians muſt be acknowledged for Brethren, *Love them as Brethren, having compaſſion one of another, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrarywiſe bleſſing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a Bleſſing*, 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9. For 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. *We know that we have paſſed from Death to Life, becauſe we love the Brethren; he that loveth not his Brother abideth in Death*, ver. 15. *Is a homicide*, ver. 10. *Is not of God, but manifeſts himſelf to be a Child of the Devil*; chap. 4. 20. *cannot love God.* And ſure if even Enemies muſt be lov'd, *that we may be like our Father*, Matth. 5. 44, 45. *and brotherly love be extended to Strangers*, as the coherence in *Heb.* 13. 1. ſeems to evince, but the duty enjoyn'd there, with the reaſon of it much more, *viz. entertaining them as we would do Angels:* Neighbours may challenge it upon a ſtronger ground, and Brethren moſt of all, and that in ſuch degrees as take in all things from the meaneſt Offices, to the very *laying down our Lives for them*, 1 *Joh.* 3. 16. If the not bridling a ferocient Tongue render a Man's Religion vain; let thoſe with trembling meaſure *Jam.* 1. 26.

the

the conſequence, who neither will govern Tongue nor Heart.

Laſtly, That part of the Catholick Church comprehended within the confines of any particular Kingdom, is and ought to be the more immediate object of every individual Subjects or Members Chriſtian Honour, Love, Care, and Reſpect, to be manifeſted by his Prayers for it, Communion with it, defence of it, and obedience to it in all lawful things; ſeeking its good in the uſe of all lawful means, with a Religious care and caution, neither to ſay, nor do, nor allow and permit any thing (which we can hinder) to be ſaid or done to its prejudice. For what is done for or againſt a part redounds to the whole, 1 *Cor.* 12. 26. and this is to be *Publick Spirited, viz.* to embrace the Publick with an univerſal Love, Care, and Endeavour, active for its Good, preventive of its Hurt and Damage, deploring its Corruptions and Miſeries, labouring with affectionate Induſtry to remedy and heal them.

Upon theſe Principles the old Nonconformiſts *Bradſhaw*, *Hilderſham*, *Ball*, *&c.* and many of the later edition, loved, reſpected, defended, and held Communion with the Congregations in the Church of *England*, where they could, as appears by their publick Writings, and known Practice, notwithſtanding the bitter Reproaches and Cenſures of ſome few, who I wiſh had as well ſtudied the Caſe.

'Twere a great impertinency and folly for me here to engage in a defence of that which has had, and yet hath ſo many more able Advocates, though if I do not forget and flatter my ſelf ſome things occur which nearly touch the merit of the Cauſe, yet not obſerved by any; and I will not betray

betray that, which for the main my Conſcience tells me is a good Cauſe, with ſo ſhort and imperfect a plea as the ſtraits of a little Chapter confine me to, therefore in proſecution of my General deſign, I ſhall only ſuggeſt ſomething of a more common influence, and wave particulars, till better occaſion or call.

1. In the Church of *England* are ſome (I wiſh there were more) Thouſands of as Sober, Pious, Diſcreet, Judicious Chriſtians, and Hundreds of as Learned, Religious Miniſters as *Europe* affords; who in their Judgments and Conſciences ſeem to be abundantly ſatisfied with, and ſtrongly plead for its Communion, upon grounds of very great moment, to inſtance only in the late calm Diſcourſes of the Reverend Dean of *Norwich*. Now for me or any Man to ſend all theſe quick to Hell, as mere Infidels or worſe; as *without Chriſt*, *Aliens from the Common-wealth of* Iſrael, (the true Church) *Strangers from the Covenants of Promiſe*, *having no hope*, *Atheiſts in the World*, Eph. 2. 12. may diſcover what Spirit we are of, but will very little recommend our own Chriſtianity, in obſervance of the Rule, *Phil.* 2. 3. *Rom.* 12. 10. 1 *Cor.* 13. 5, 7.

2. The *Church of England* and *Diſſenters* agree in all the main Subſtantials of Chriſtianity, the difference only lies in a few controverted things, of very inconſiderable conſequence in compariſon. The ſame Chriſtian Doctrine in all the Fundamental Points, the ſame general deſign to promote Holineſs of Life; the ſame Worſhip in the Eſſential form, and matter and means, the ſame Miniſtry, of Perſons ſeparate to perform Divine Offices in the ſame form of Churches, *viz.* Congregational, who are embodied not meerly by

by the civil Sanction, but consent to submit to the Ordinances and Ministers of Christ, which with the Departers (I call them rather than Dissenters) constitute the *Explicit Covenant, and Essence of the Ministerial Call*; but differing only in a few circumstantial Doctrines, in external Modes, and Rites, disputed and disputable to the Worlds end. And shall so light matters alienate us, imbitter our Spirits, envenom our Censures, when we agree in the main? Ah Sirs, should God Almighty thus mark Iniquities, who could stand? Does he appoint a Sacrifice for Sins of Ignorance and Infirmity, hold Communion with us notwithstanding them, not impute them to us? And shall such things be unpardonable only in the *Church of England*, which judges its own Constitution the most excellent in the World, and thinks it has as much to say against you, as you against it, as much to say for it self, as you for your selves, which you can no more convince, than it can you?

Lastly, To justifie your departure, nothing can be justly alledged but fear of Sin in Communion. Now nothing can determine what is, what is not Sin, but God in his Word. You are then obliged to produce Scripture as clear to prove Communion a Sin, as 'tis clear from Scripture that 'tis your duty to obey the Magistrate in lawful things. For if the Communion which he commands be not unlawful, you ought in Conscience to obey him in it, *Rom.* 13. 5. The General includes the Particular. But I profess amongst all the Writings against Communion, I have not yet seen any one, or more Scriptures alledged, which apart or in conjunction, will evidently and certainly bear such a consequence. Now turn we the Tables, and bleed a little over poor Sufferers (not as accusing

ſing Laws of Government, but perſonal darkneſs and ſhort ſightedneſs, Infirmity and Iniquity eſpecially as the meritorious cauſe) whoſe Intellects and Conſciences may ſeem to be formed under an inauſpicious Star, not *Mercurial* enough to be born before the Wind, but of a genius too ſet, and *Saturnine*, which expoſes to the cenſure of being moroſe, obſtinate, *Melancholiſts*, &c. But let's ſee whether any place be left for Pity and Commiſeration.

It is acknowledged juſt and reaſonable, that all publick Conſtitutions, ſhould be garded with ſtrong impregnable Sanctions, that the honour of the Publick Magiſtrate, which muſt neceſſarily, and in Conſcience be upheld, and is as highly concerned in his Laws as any thing, may not be at the mercy of every wanton Head, or waſpiſh Heart. 'Tis the general and acknowledged ſence of all Nations, and has been of all Ages, and (I think of all Perſons) that Religion muſt and ought to be eſtabliſhed by Law. So is the Proteſtant Profeſſion with us and our Neighbours. And there is not a People upon Earth, nor ever was, but would have Religious Concerns kept ſacred and inviolable. Travel through the Proteſtant World alone, and you ſhall experimentally find, that the Church of no Nation, no not of *New England* it ſelf, will endure that its Conſtitution ſhould be diſgrac'd, its Fellowſhip diſown'd, its Worſhip diſavow'd, its Miniſtry diſannul'd, its Diſcipline contemn'd, its Government condemn'd; but will entertain all affronts of this Nature with a ſevere Indignation. No wonder therefore that the like obtains amongſt our ſelves, and even thoſe that are moſt ſharp upon the *Church of England*, in that very thing give a Teſtimony how patient a reception

reception any thing must have, that shall depreciate their own particular Models, and therefore may in Justice grant liberty to every Mother to be fondest of her own Children: For my part I profess ingenuously I like something in all Faces, but all in none, yet will not spit in any. If Men will so far forget their Reason and Religion, not to say common Sense, as to speak evil of Rulers, *Jude* 8. though unjust, *Acts* 23. 5. *Despise Dominion, Blaspheme* [*Glories or*] *Dignities*, I will not justifie them but the Law that condemns them. Yet there is a *Chancery* to moderate the rigours, which otherwise may be just, and reasonable in some cases; and this will, with a sweet and decorous ἐπιείκεια, and temper distinguish of Persons and Causes.

No Man is all Devil, no Party all God. The Heaven of Heavens only is all Sun. The void spaces in the Firmament are larger than those fill'd with Stars. Even those that out of a larger Sphere or Church, form to themselves a little Epicycle, have dark as well as bright matter in it. The Sun it self hath spots.

We therefore must make a difference, betwixt the Religious and their mimical Apes; the Persons that are in good earnest in their way, and such as do but act a part, and personate those they are not. Men that have throughly imbibed the tincture, and others that are but lightly smutted with it.

1. Then it shall not be dissembled but bewailed, that amongst the Dissenters there are some *Venal Souls*, that upon base Principles, and for sinister Ends, fall in here as being disgusted by, or having a peck against some conformable Man, or hoping for a plentiful Trade, or bountiful Contributions,

tributions, or to piece again a crack'd Reputation, *&c.* Others owe their intromiſſion to the Principles of their Education, or cuſtomary Converſe with others, particular Employment amongſt ſuch, the perſuaſions of Company, *&c.* Some aſtoniſh'd by the ſeeming imminency of Death, or awak'd by ſome dreadful Calamity, bring hither an akeing Conſcience, to be ſtroak'd with a gentle Hand, into a ſecure but fallacious Peace, and conjure down thoſe Terrors which a a form of Godlineſs is able to deal with. Some, laſtly, in the ſimplicity of their Hearts, having tender and ſcrupulous Conſciences, finding more of ſtrictneſs and ſavour than where 'twas their lot to converſe before, are pleas'd with the agreeableneſs thereof to their Spirit and Temper, though they underſtand little of the way, and might as well have been led by the Heart to the Church as to a Conventicle, had it been their hap to have met with the like reliſh in their Entertainments and Company. Theſe are the moſt innocent of this rank. For ſome of the reſt are ordinarily the Hectors of the ſeveral Parties, from whom all the Libels and Raileries (except ſuch as common Enemies forge in their Names) have their Origin. Better Men have better Work, they are not taught the manners of the Court of Heaven, who dare bring an Accuſation [or Judgment] of Blaſphemy againſt the Devil himſelf, *Jude* 9. much leſs they who do it againſt Chriſtian Churches and States.

But, 2. There are alſo a number of ſerious ſober Perſons, who have no greater deſign than to be truly good, and promote the intereſt of real Chriſtianity in the main ſubſtantials of *Faith* and *Good Life*; who by their Modeſty, Gravity, Harmleſsneſs

leſſneſs, Honeſty, Simplicity, Self-denial, Loyalty, Humility, &c. do ſufficiently diſtinguiſh themſelves from the other, to the Eye of any prudent impartial Obſerver, yet cannot in the uſe of ſuch means as yet are adminiſtred, receive ſatisfaction in the matters of difference, therefore are expoſed to the ſeverities of Law: Theſe I am concern'd that a Court of equity ſhould make relief for.

1. They entertain a high Veneration for the Holy Scriptures, as a lively Portraicture and Repreſentation of that Eternal Truth and Goodneſs which is the Nature of God, and the Schools make the *Hypoſtaſis* of the Second and Third Perſons in the ever bleſſed Trinity. This with them is the Book of Books, which they do not read as other Writings with a liberty to aſſent and conſent as they pleaſe, but with a full reſignation of mind and will to its infallible Dictates, intirely to ſubjugate all to its Doctrines, Counſels, Mandates, as the moſt perfect indefective guide of Thoughts, Words and Actions in the matters of Salvation, and to receive from it a ſentence of Life and Death. This Word of God is their daily Companion, Meditation, Deſire, Joy, Delight, their all. From theſe Divine Oracles they derive all their Sentiments, by them regulate all their Worſhip, in them ſeek their Comfort, to them, as an Inſtrument, aſcribe their Spiritual Life, with them arm themſelves againſt all their Spiritual Enemies, and adverſe Occurrents, and for them are ready to ſacrifice their Liberties, Wealth, Eaſe, Honour, yea their very Lives.

2. From this reverence to the Bible, and diligent frequent converſes with it, ariſes that awful, feeling, terrifying ſence they have of the exceeding

ing ſinfulneſs of Sin, as *Paul*, *Rom.* 7. 13. For being brought to the Scriptures with a mind to yield up all the Powers of their Souls to the Mind and Will of God therein revealed, the Holy Ghoſt effectually ſets home the Truths, and Laws, and Threatnings, and Promiſes upon their Conſciences. They have awakening apprehenſions of the Holineſs and Juſtice of God, the dreadful menaces of the Law, the bitter Agonies undergone by the Son of God for the Sin of Man, the diſmal Horrors, and Woes, and Cruciations, under the Vengeance of Almighty God in Hell, which makes every Sin very formidable. They are made to underſtand, that although, in reſpect of the matter, ſome Sins are greater, others leſs, yet no Sin is abſolutely little, which is commited againſt a great God; and alſo that ſmaller Sins are aggravated relatively to our Faculties, that 'tis an heinous offence to God, to do the leaſt of Evils, againſt the clear Light and Conviction of Conſcience, or with a full bent of Will and Affection; and that a Sin, in reſpect of the matter comparatively, and in it ſelf greater, yet is not ſo to me, if committed ignorantly, unwillingly. Under theſe Conſiderations, their own particular Sins are ſet in order before their Faces, ſet on upon their awakned Conſciences, made bitter, and grievous, and odious; that they Day and Night lament over them, are afflicted with them in anguiſh of Soul under them, labouring, and being heavy laden, and able to obtain reſt no where, till by ſerious, hearty Repentance for, and from them, with a bitter loathing and implacable malice and hatred againſt them, they be prepar'd for, and made willing to embrace the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, in his whole mediatory Latitude, and intirely devote themſelves to him, and his Father in

the renewal of their *Baptismal Covenant*, which they most solemnly and unfeignedly engage in, and universally submit to the Terms of, in the Strength and Grace of Christ. Upon this Covenanting with God, they see and know, that to sin against him in any thing wittingly or willingly, will in them be yet more exceeding sinful than before, and still the more they oblige themselves to God, and he engages them to himself, and endears himself to them, by the communication of Covenant-Mercies, the more do they find their Sins to be inhanced in their abominable odiousness to God, and the smart and sting they leave in their Consciences, is so much the more grievous. Oh none knows the dire and dismal things which a wounded Spirit undergoes, but those that have felt. *The Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmity, but a wounded Spirit, who can bear?* Prov. 18.14. And this too has its degrees of Intolerableness, in proportion to Sins, and Sence, and Temper, and Time, and Spirit, and Improvement. Men of strong Parts, great Reading, comprehensive Intellects, large Memories, ready and present Minds, may sometimes soon and easily weather out the Storm. But all Mens intellectuals and advances in Knowledge and Goodness, are not of one size. What shall poor weak shallow Heads, or melancholick Constitutions, and therefore strong Imaginations, defective treacherous Memories, but unruly Consciences, do, when both Heaven and Hell seem to be set in Battle-array against them? Horrid Reflections, virulent and violent Temptations, strange and terrible Injections, and Infusions, as drawn Swords gashing, and galling, and killing the very Heart, piercing it through with multitudes of Fears, Troubles, Torments, Sorrows? Can a

Man

Man that hath felt this, Groan'd under, been Crush'd, and Crucifi'd, and Rack'd, and Rent in pieces with it, and that perhaps many Weeks, Months, Years together, ever make light of the cause of it, ever have other than dreadful Apprehensions of it, as the burn'd Child?

Fancy and Reason can never comprehend what Sense, and Experience will testifie in these Cases. Speculative Men that stand upon their Heads, which have little or no Communion with their Hearts, who understand every thing better than themselves, very seldom feel any of these lamentable Twitches and Agonies, till a Sickness, a Deathbed, set their thoughts upon another Bias, which in some obtains; (in most not at all) and then according to the largness of their minds are their Horrors of Conscience, and their feeling may teach them fellow-feeling when it is too late; but the unconcernedness of their Spirits before, conjures down all workings of Commiseration: As a Man of an *Athletick* Constitution, in the triumphs of his natural Vigour and Health, accounts valetudinary Persons a company of pitiful puling Sneaks, always whining over an itching Limb in the Scurvey, or a smarting Toe in the Gout, or a rumbling Belly in the Chollick or Gripes, or an akeing Back in the Stone, or a squeazy Stomach, or tickling Tooth, &c. in which they are the Objects of his Ridicule, rather than compassionate regard: But let his brass Pot receive a sound knock from any of these mauling Distempers, or the like, and the Complexion of his thoughts immediately change, and from the foot he can now Collect the Dimensions of *Hercules*.

I doubt not but that (as many Holy Souls enjoy some refreshing Antepasts of the future ever-

lasting Feast of all Delights and Joys they shall sit down with Christ at, in his Eternal Kingdom: So) many wicked profligate Wretches meet with dismal and sensible Prelibations of the never ending Woes and Horrors of Hell; that knowing by some Internal Sensations what awaits them, they may either be awak'd into Repentance, or if not, rendred more inexcuseable. And sometimes God in his Infinite Wisdom so orders, that even those who ascend not to any heighth in Debauchery, yet are reduc'd to such extreamities of Anguish, and Pangs in the *New Birth*, that it comes very little short of those more Dreadful Anticipations in the Reprobate; nay sometimes it exceeds in a considerable degree. Sin must have its Hell of one kind or other, and happy is it for that Man, whose Hell in this Life is preventive of, not introductive to a future: For, beside the unspeakable Satisfactions in another World, this lays the Foundation of the Richest, Sweetest, Fullest, and most durable Consolations even in this Life, according to the common saying; *God digs deepest where he intends to build highest.* But on the contrary, *where he breaks no Earth, he intends to sow no Seed.* Those that he permits to be always whole, shall never have, because they never need a Physician.

General Experience tells, That the Corruption of carnal Ease and Security, is the Generation of a Dissenter. Troubles for Sin are the πρωτόπλασμα, the first Rudiments of this *Embryo.* It seldom falls out, that a Mans or Womans Conscience is thorowly disturb'd, and their fallacious Peace and Comfort utterly ruin'd, but either the want of a skilful and tender hand, to bind up their broken Hearts, or some check they meet with in an unseasonable hour, from those that should be

vers'd

vers'd in this Art, drives them (under that great uneaſineſs of mind) to take Sanctuary in the boſom of one or other, that with more ſoft and compaſſionate Bowels, will counſel and encourage them; yet not precipitate them into the *Pacifick Seas* of Conſolation, but gently and by degrees lead them thither, through the Strait of a ſound *Repentance*. I know not how it comes to paſs, God's Diſpenſations always are Wiſe, Juſt and Holy, but oft unaccountable; yet ſo it is, that either the Genius of Mens Troubles, under their Penitential Throws in the new Birth, or the underſtanding, Spirit, manage and conduct, of many Non-conforming Miniſters, is ſuch, or theſe both ſo Adapted to one another, that the greateſt number of Wounded Spirits betake themſelves hither for Cure, and find it. The Study of Caſuiſtical Divinity being leſs guſtful to great Scholars, and Rational Theologers, is more the buſineſs of thoſe, who having felt ſome need themſelves of it, have alſo frequent occaſion to deal with dejected Hearts, rather than elevated Minds: And neither *Rhetorick* nor *Reaſon*, but effectual *Medicines* will cure the Maladies of *Bodies* and *Souls*.

The Sick deſire not an Eloquent, but Healing Phyſician; where they are profited, there they love.

*Non quærit æger medicum eloquentem, ſed ſanantem*, Sen. *Ep.* 75.

Conſcience is ſuch an Impetuous, Imperious thing, as thoſe may know who converſe with their own, but who with other Mens, much more; that a Man had better have all the World to deal with, than it; eſpecially in a Melancholick Conſtitution. By Conſcience I underſtand the inward Power, not in the nature of a *Guide*, but a *Judge*, particularly in its *Office* of *Condemning*, or at leaſt *Accuſing*;

*cusing*; as *Rom.* 2. 14. O what Troubles, Tragedies, Confusions, Horrors, does it beget, carry on and torture with, especially in the weaker Sex, that have Souls to save and satisfie as well as the stronger, who sometimes also are made terrible Examples: *Witness Francis Spira*, &c. which made one say, he had rather undertake the Cure of a *Phrenetick* in *Bedlam*, than a *Phanatick Conscience*. Truly (upon Experience I speak it) I had rather Study an Hundred Sermons, than converse one hour with a Self-condemning Mind: It can understand no Sense, it can hear no Reason, it can feel no Savour, it can receive no Comfort. God is against it, 'tis against it self; the whole Bible in every Leaf speaks to its Discouragement and Damnation, and all the *Politicks* in Hell are up in Arms to confound it, with Scruples, Objections, Fears, what not. Oh! the Doubts, the Dolours, the Jealousies, the inextricable Straits, the Fightings, the Perplexities, the dismal Apprehensions, the Despairs, the grinding Reflections, the roaring Hell that compasses it round about on every side; that 'tis a very *Magor Missabib*. Really 'twould make a Man sick to think of it, break his Bones, *Psal.* 51. 8. to feel it. Ah! did but those who so bitterly inveigh against *Phanaticks*, experience but one day what some of them have felt, for Months, Years together, under the sense of God's Indignation, 'twould to purpose cool that hot Humour which foams out of their Mouths. God grant them Repentance, that they may never feel worse. I would not wish this to the greatest Enemy in the World. 'Tis true, God uses gentle methods with the most, yet these dreadful Instances are warnings to them, and all not to Sin against Light and Conscience: For this is ordinarily the spring

of

of them, and they a Judgment of God for it.

*Lastly*, From this Sense and Conscience arises their fear of offending God, in the concerns of his immediate *Worship*, which I confess in some prevails so far, as to involve them in the extreams of *Superstition*. This I take to be an excess of curiosity in Religious *Worship*, either in thinking to please, or in fearing to displease the *Divine Majesty* with little things, which are neither commanded nor forbidden: For if the least things in the World be commanded or forbidden in express words, or by plain consequence in special or general Terms, 'tis no Superstition, except more stress be laid upon these than the weightier matters of the Law. So that I will acknowledge, that they commit this Sin who think to please God with their extemporary Effusions without inward Devotions, as well as they that conceit they do it, with the Churches form, without the Power of Internal Grace: So they who fear to offend God, by using the Churches form, as such, rather than by formality of Spirit, &c. as well as they that fansie they should more displease him by immediate Conceptions in Prayer, than by luke warm Affections. I will justifie neither the Positive nor Negative, the Absolute nor Comparative Superstition. *Plutarch* I confess falls foul upon that which represents the Deity as *Tyranical*, *Noxious*, hard to be pleas'd, and works a desponding Dread and Terror, which render

*Plut. περὶ δεισιδαιμ.: ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῖς θεοῖς εὐχόμεθα, &c. We require that you should pray to God, with an upright and just mouth, not so much look at the Tongue, &c. of Beasts, whether right and pure, perverting and polluting your own, &c.*

*I think he directs his discourse against the* Jews *mainly.*

render it unfit for, and unwilling to engage it self in any Service of God, as fearing to displease in all, please in none. And the Greek Word may seem to extend no farther, than such a fear of *Dæmons*, which the Heathen World did not understand as we, in an infamous sense. *Dæmons* with them, were those Blessed Beings, that ever lived in Happiness, but in an inferiour Station, Souls of *Heroes* and other Spiritual Natures; much what such like as the Popish Canoniz'd Saints, and Mediators of Intercession; to the Noxious Malignant Spirits of the Infernal Regions, they did not apply it: Yet no doubt, the other I have mentioned, are Sins, and may go under this name, in regard of the Affinity they have herewith, according to that common Synecdoche, in every of the Ten Commands. However I am right in terming that over critical fear of displeasing God with little things, Superstition; as supposing the Deity was of so cheap and easie a Nature, as to be bought with Trifles, or so tetchy and supercilious, as to be lost and sold away for such petty Matters, as he would never vouchsafe to take into his Cognizance, and concern himself to Honour with the least Shadow of an Injunction, but has intirely left to the will and liberty of Man: As if a *Jew* having a Hundred Males in his Flock, without blemish alike in their nature and goodness, out of which he has a free liberty left him by God, to chuse any one for Sacrifice, should demur all his days which to take, for fear of offending God, or having chosen and Sacrificed, should perpetually vex his Soul with the dread, that his choice has displeased. This leads me again to the fore-mentioned Point. The sense that some have of the more especial odiousness to God, of blemishes in

his

his Worſhip. Certainly, of all Sins, thoſe in this moſt weighty Matter, are moſt dangerous: For if that the direct and immediate end whereof is to pleaſe God, and bring me into his Favour, do diſpleaſe him, ſo that I fall under his hate, I am in an evil taking beyond all expreſſion. What ſhall I do, whether ſhall I have recourſe? The Scripture aſſures us that God is moſt Jealous of his Worſhip, and External Worſhip, as the Sanction annext to the ſecond Command evinces: and therefore calls the Sin there forbidden expreſsly by the fouleſt name, *Adultery*, the higheſt Violation of the Matrimonial Covenant; a Man can bear any thing in his Wife better than that. 'Tis with alluſion to this, that the *Lord* ſtiles himſelf a Jealous God. This imports that he hath a peculiar and ſpecial enmity againſt the Violations of the *Second Command*, beyond all other, ſince this is affixed to no other. And indeed *Idolatry* may well be ſet in the uppermoſt rank of Sins, becauſe the External Woſhip of *Idols* does imply the Internal; together with the rejection of the true God, which is a Violation of both the Firſt and Third, yea and Fourth Command, as well as the Second: For he that externally adores other Gods, beſides the true, has them inwardly in his heart, and therefore caſts off the Creator of the World; in that he gives him not the Honour of God which is Supreme; takes his Name in vain, ſeeing it has not that due effect upon his Mind and Heart; and therefore cannot *Remember* the Sabbath, as God's Reſt from his Six days Labour, nor keep it Holy to him, becauſe he owns him not in his Soveraign Excellency and Glory. Theſe Conſiderations, with the terrible Executions upon the *Iſraelites*, and others, for Corruption in the Worſhip of God, as warnings to

us,

us, *Rom.* 10. are of mighty moment, when duly applied; and therefore no wonder, that Men, who have been in bitterneſs for other Sins, do above all, dread theſe againſt the Second Command, which God, above all, abhors; no wonder if they be jealous (where God is) of any thing that may ſeem to intrench ſo near, upon the Honour God. Let Men prate and droll what they will againſt ſerious Men, this is certainly the bottom of all their Fears; and that is not a vain Superſtitious Fear which is rightly directed here, but the very firſt principle and beginning of all Divine and Spiritual Wiſdom, and ought not to be diſcouraged and wreſted from Men, by the Power and Policy of Earth and Hell, which combine to do this, by exciting other Fears, *viz.* of Temporal Puniſhments. The Damnation of Mens Souls, by acts ſo abominable to the Divine Majeſty, is infinitely more formidable in its ſelf than any thing: And therefore weak frail Fleſh, in which we are oft more ſenſible, ſhould not be tempted and terrified into a regardleſneſs of this greateſt of all hazards, by any deſigns upon that moſt natural Inſtinct and Law of Self-preſervation; which indeed is madneſs, when it cannot take place, but in the Eternal Deſtruction of the Soul. I ſaid this Fear muſt be rightly directed, that it may not be Superſtition: And 'tis ſo, when 'tis graduated according to the nature of the thing, and the Sentiments of the Divine Majeſty; ſo that what he moſt hates, we moſt fear, and proceed therein, according to the Revelation of God, and let fall our fear where he lets fall his loathing, or reveals nothing of it, for there begins Superſtition. So again, 'tis ill regulated, though we dread to offend in lighter Matters, poſſibly under Divine Prohibi-

Prohibitions; if yet we regard not the main: For to fear, where no fear is, or to fear more, where leſs fear is; or fear leſs, where more fear is; theſe three are Superſtition. But to fear proportionably to the greatneſs of the Sin, and clearneſs of the Light, is not; but a regular fear of God, which he will accept, own, and reward.

It is not my Province or Deſign, nor Proper to this place, to recite, and plead, or refute and diſprove the Allegations of either one Party or other; only do heartily wiſh, that I could ſee more of that true Chriſtian Spirit of Love, Moderation, and Meekneſs, on all ſides, which the Goſpel ſo earneſtly recommends; for Comfort ſhall we find in nothing elſe, when the Account is caſt up at laſt. Church-men, of all others, ſhould be men, of diſpaſſionate, ſoft, and tender Hearts; becauſe entruſted with the Guidance of the tendereſt Part of their People, *viz.* their Conſciences. But truly I meet it not on any hand, except amongſt a very few: The violent, bitter, irremediable Prejudices of the Laity, in every Party, have their Root in the Clergy. 'Tis rare to light on a man of a healing Spirit, which is as a *ſpeckled Bird* when found; the Birds round about are againſt her, every Man has an Arrow to ſhoot at her. But, Will the end and iſſue hereof be Peace? No, it will not, it cannot.

Since then, that fear to offend God in the Concerns of his Honour and Worſhip, which would approve it ſelf not to be Superſtition, muſt be a Branch of that *general Awe and Fear*, which is the beginning of Wiſdom; 'tis abſolutely neceſſary, that it have a ſure and infallible Light and Guide: For, let not Men think that a fear of offending the Divine Majeſty, unpreſcribed by God

in

in his Word, either in expreſs terms, or by plain conſequence, can ſlip the halter, and get out of the danger of that Scripture, which condemns the Traditionary Man-created Fear of the Scribes and Phariſees, propheſied of by *Iſa.* 29. 13. applied by our Saviour, *Mat.* 15. 8, 9. See then to your bottom, that ſome plain Scripture teach you to be affraid of diſpleaſing God, by joyning in the Worſhip uſed by the Church; elſe this very Scripture, which you think makes for you, does really condemn you. For 'tis evident, that ſuch a Fear is a part of that Internal Worſhip, which you pay to God, and if that be unpreſcribed by God, Where are you? But it never can be made evident, I think, that the Church preſcribes any parts or means of Worſhip, unpreſcribed by God; although there be ſome things adjoined to the Worſhip, (which is in Circumſtantials allowed by all Parties) that are not commanded, (neither forbid) by God.

On the other hand, I doubt the Scriptures that are alledged by the Diſſenters, are not ſo thorowly weighed, ſo calmly debated, ſo unprejudicately examin'd, ſo fully anſwer'd, as they might be; no ſuch a Spirit of Love and Compaſſion, manifeſted in the manage of Diſputes againſt them, as is neceſſary to win them, and win upon them. For they generally conceive the Replies given, do not reach the Caſe, and ſo thought Mr. *Jeans* alſo, a Man who hath writ ſomething, that I have, in behalf of the Church.

Now let it be conſider'd, what Chriſtian Equity and Moderation ſhould be extended to Perſons, whoſe Underſtandings are not omniportant, but Hearts and Conſciences good for the main, and in all the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity; and whether it does

does not highly become such a flourishing Christian Church, such a noble, well-regulated State, to make a difference of Persons, *Jude* 22. lest the Bowels of Christ be wounded through our want of Bowels to those, whom the same Church might receive, if some inferiour Matters were forborn, and the same Heaven must receive, or we are of all Creatures most miserable. For the Mercies of God's sake, for the Love of Christ's sake, consider again and again, how light a matter a Mode or Ceremony is; how heavy a matter Sin is, and let not Dust and Vanity, be balanc'd with Mens Salvation: Say not Contempt of Publick Order is not a light thing, tho' these be. Oh condemn not the Innocent with the Guilty: Let those who contemn manifestly, and contumaciously, suffer; but certainly 'tis not Contempt in all, but a reverend Fear of contemning the publick Orders of Heaven, which all Men confess, no Man can order the Violation of. It seems clear to many, that to do things required, is forbidden by God; they are mistaken: Grant it, yet they think, not. Their Consciences seem to be resolv'd, tho' it be in an Error, unknown to them: Therefore to them, 'tis as clear, that no force can be put upon them, no command of man over-rule them, where they judge God has obliged them. They read, they hear, they pray, they study, and consider all things, on all hands, as they are able; yet cannot change their minds, tho' it be highly their external Interest so to do. And shall no humanity be extended to such modest, humble, loyal, patient, teachable Dissenters, that are ready to engage in all Bonds to live peaceably, in all Oaths to be true Subjects, to subscribe (according to the Act) to the Articles of Religion, abating one or

two

two Non-Essentials, and therefore are of the same common Faith; to the Ten Commands, and therefore agree to lead the same godly Life? Are there no Commiserations for such as these? Oh come Lord Jesus, come quickly; diffuse abroad that excellent Spirit of Love, Unity, and Christianity, which will engage every one of us to judge, that our proper Good is more in the Publique than Our Selves, that the common Interest of Religion, is infinitely more our Concern, than any of our little Bones of Contention, that we may not be cracking Nuts, pursuing after Butterflies, smiting our Fellow-servants, eating and drinking with the Drunken, when the Heavens begin to crack about our ears, and all is ready to be wrapt up in a common Ruine.

Well, Shall we be Christians, or shall we not? Must that which will be our Glory and Crown above, rule our Hearts and Practices now?, Let us be Persons of great and generous Minds, disdaining to debase the Nobleness of those Natures, which are capable of enjoying an Immense God, to such a degree of Childishness, as to be infinitely concern'd about the miserable things, which little Souls continually scramble for, is it a piece of substantial goodness and honesty? Does it conduce to promote and establish a real Deiformity, or Similitude to God? Will it actually tend to subdue mens Passions, and Pride, and Worldliness, and Sensuality? May we by and through it elevate our Minds to that Heavenly Constitution, as to be mete for Converses with a Pure and Holy God? Does it subjugate the Will of Man to his Maker, render him acceptable to Heaven, profitable to Earth, in the Great Ends of Godliness, Righteousness, Sobriety? Did God institute it

for

for these Purposes? With all my Soul am I for it; I'll hug it in my Bosome, lay it next my heart, honour it with my best endeavours, to advance it in my self, and the world. But if it be only a Trick, a Device, a Policy, to be Grand, and Gaudy, and Terrible, and Triumphant, and Imperious; to salve a Sore, to make, maintain, please a Party; to countenance, keep up an Interest, or suppress, oppress, depress real Religiousness; under some disguising Pretences: Away with it, 'tis unbecoming the Christian Spirit, it favours not, nor of, true Magnitude of Mind.

This Man is for Prelacy, the other against it; one applauds the National Constitution, comprehending all Congregations, as united under the Ecclesiastical Government of Bishops, and the Civil Government of one Political Head, the King; another allows it not, yet professes, and is ready to give all desired Security for Allegiance. That Man pleads for, and uses a Liturgy, or Set Form in Divine Offices; this would modifie all himself. There some think for further Decency and Order, Ceremonies must accompany or follow Divine Institutions; here are a Company tooth and nail against them. This Point of Doctrine must be express'd in such and such Terms, the other is untenable, except in such a Sense and Dress, and every Head in things of this nature, has a different Crotchet. Well, Are the main Substantials of Christianity retain'd; Irreligion, Idolatry renounc'd, the necessity of Government maintain'd, the Deity worshipped in and through the only Mediator Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, with his Gifts and Graces, in order to a New Life, acknowledged? In summ, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, in their plain and most

obvious

obvious ſenſe, receiv'd, ſubmitted to, as the perfect Rule of Faith and Manners; Holineſs and Vertue practiſed, and promoted? Here fix. What d'ye tell us of Unwritten, Unſcriptural Phraſes and Forms, and Modes, and Orders, and Rites, and Circumſtances, and Phylacteries, and Fringes, and Laces, and Fancies, and Fooleries, and Phrenzies? To *Bedlam* with the Mad-men, that cannot be ſatisfied and pleas'd with the Noble and Incomparable Ordinations of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, but muſt preſcribe to their Maker, and outdo boundleſs Perfection. Why (like the Ægyptian Apes) do we tear in pieces one anothers Ornaments; nay, one another for Nuts and Trifles? Are we not agreed in the main Eſſentials of Chriſtianity? Being therefore of the ſame Catholick Body, Why muſt this Mans Head be ſtruck off, becauſe he hath a Feather in his Cap; and the others, becauſe he has none? That Man be begg'd for a Fool, becauſe, by paying free Rent, he owns a Meſn Lord? Another branded for a Knave, for deſiring to be a Meſn Lord himſelf, or depend immediately upon the King? Some ſent to the Hoſpital, becauſe they need, and would have Crutches, others to Bridewel, who will have none? Are not the one Men as well as the other, and ſhould not common Nature ingenerate a common Senſe? Muſt it ſtill be *Homo homini Lanius, Lupus?* Are not both Chriſtians? And ſhall it be *Chriſtianus Chriſtiano Dæmon?* That Man's a *Heretick Devil*, I'll ſear and tear him with my burning Pincers, ſays St. *Dunſtan.* This is a *Schiſmatick Dog*, I'll have his Ears, ſays another St. *Some-body:* Thou art a cold *Formaliſt*, and Hell muſt warm and fire thee, ſays another St. *No-body.* And a thouſand to one, the *Heretick*, the *Schiſmatick* and *Formaliſt*,

is

is the better Man and Christian. Oh *Babylon*, *Babylon*, where art thou not? Really we may (with the Philosopher) light our Candle at noon day among Christians, to seek for Christianity.

Let it then pass uncontroulable, that a Man can never be publick spirited, except upon Principles truly Catholick; nor will any other Spirit or Principles, administer sound, true and solid Comfort, and Peace. As the contracted shrivling, confining, narrow Temper, begets all the Confusions, Broils, Branglings and Blood-sheds, in the world; so it leaves nothing at home in conclusion but dire, ingrateful Reflections, and an horrible Combustion of Conscience; or at the least, Inquietude and Uneasiness of Mind; any thing but Satisfaction, Joy and Rest: Of such Men I say, as *Gen.* 49. 6. *Oh my Soul, come not thou into their Secret, unto their Assembly mine Honour be not thou united.*

And now, Oh my Soul, what is thy Trouble, and Sorrow, and Anxiety of Mind? Or, what are thy Desires, Cares, Delight, Joy, Contrivances, Counsels, Activity concern'd about? Canst thou feed upon thy sweet Morsels alone, and glory in the Affluence of Personal or Domestick Blessings, while the Gates of *Sion* mourn? Are any in Affliction, imprisoned, persecuted for Righteousness sake, and wilt st not thou bear a part in their Dolours, *Remembring those in Bonds as bound with them, and them which suffer Adversity, as being thy self also in the Body*, Heb. 13. 3? Dost thou not partake of that common Spirit of Goodness, Compassion, Charity, which as good Blood diffuses it self, and circulates through all the Members of that one Body, ingenerating an universal Fellow-feeling, and Care of mutual and general

Concerns in all and every one that lives by the Life of the Head in *Heaven*? *Art thou weak with the Weak, and with the Offended doſt thou burn?* 2 Cor. 11. 29. *Canſt thou bear every ones burthen, and ſo fulfill the Law of Chriſt; and reſtore thoſe overtaken with Infirmities, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted,* Gal. 6. 1, 2. See the Apoſtle proſecuting this Argument fully, 1 *Cor.* 12. 12. to 27. If thou be acted by the private, ſtrait-lac'd, ſelfiſh Spirit of the generality, who can neither give a jot of eaſe to themſelves, under their Perſonal Straits and Sorrows, by a ſerious Reflection on the Welfare of the Church of God; nor will in the leaſt imbitter their Joys with any Conſiderations of the Afflictions of *Joſeph*; ſuſpect thy ſelf to be an Alien from the Life, and the Catholick Body of Jeſus Chriſt, which ſubſiſts by a Vital Union with him. What now are the Meaſures, by which thou acteſt in thy Station, and with reſpect to the Members of Chriſt? If thou eſpouſe, and tenaciouſly adhere to, only the Sentiments of ſome Particular Party, or Sect, farewel all publick Spiritedneſs. Thou profeſſeſt a Belief of the *Communion of Saints*, as in one *Catholick Church*; which is indeed an Inviſible Thing, as are all Objects of *Faith*, in its diſtinction from *Senſe*. Does this Faith work by Love? Thou owneſt alſo one Univerſal *Body*, ſeen in its parts, viſible in its whole extent throughout the World, actually by the Eyes of its Head ſeen in its Unity at once; and potentially by Man. Which is not a *Chaos* of every thing in confuſion, but an Organical Body that in diverſity of uſeful comely Members, Parts, Congregations, (the leaſt of the denomination) Countries, and Kingdoms, makes up a lovely Community. Not a Rope of Sand, but a Golden Chain, where every

very Link has its Beauty, Preciousness, Connexion, Suitableness: A Garden enclosed, where variety of Walks, Beds, *&c.* constitute a fair delicious *Paradise.* One Spouse of Christ, one Body for one Head. Does thy Fancy or Partiality here make Restrictions? Can'st thou, dar'st thou chop and mangle this Body? Tear off a Limb of this Spouse? Break the golden Chain for one Link? And dote upon these, without regard to the rest? Can thy Love walk no where but in little Severals, and petty Enclosures? In this sence, I cannot disallow that Saying of a Great Person, *viz. That the Church of Christ is neither* Rome, *nor a Conventicle:* There may be some Part of it there, but confin'd to either it cannot be, exclusively to the rest of the World. Art thou a Christian? Then must Christianity command the freest Motions of thy Affections; the Interest of that, thou must and shalt respect, honour, promote and love; not as it is pretended, or conceitedly monopolized by any distinct Party; but as (like the Sun) it diffuses its efficiency, vertue and influence every where, and shines with a lovely radiancy and glory, in any Man whatsoever. Seest thou one, that in the judgment of rational Charity, makes Religion his principal Business, above all labouring, that it may have a prevalent Interest in his Heart? Cleave to this Man, embrace him in thy most near, and intimate Affections, be he of what Party soever. Dost thou find any diligently searching the Word of God, to know him in all his Perfections, not meerly for Notion sake, but that his inward Soul and outward Conversation, may be under the Dominion and Command of what he knows: A Man that maintains a high and honourable esteem of the ever blessed *Redeemer* of the World, the on-

ly begotten Son of God, as the alone *Saviour* of Mankind; taking the greatest care, to gain a true and full Understanding of his Excellency, Undertaking, Offices, and Benefits, that he may entirely devote himself to him. A Man that is daily acquainting himself, how much it is his Interest to live under the Conduct of the *Holy Ghost*, and therefore studies his inspired Writings, to attain right Apprehensions concerning his Nature, Gifts, Graces, Comforts, that he may aspire after them, inwardly feel them in their power; and accordingly engages his Mind, Will, Affections, Conscience, executive Power, all within and without him, in an universal Subjection to this Holy *Trinity* in Unity; and with a reverend Awefulness minggled with Love, demeans himself under the Government of that ever Adoreable Majesty, as one that hath present, powerful Sensations of its immediate Presence, Oversight, and perfect Cognizance, of the most secret recesses of his Soul. A man, that understanding his relation to God, owns Him, pants after Him with insatiable Ardour, cleaves unto Him with full purpose of heart, in a singular Complacency; fears, praises, glorifies, trusts, chooses, embraces, acknowledges Him in all His ways, as His chief Good and Happiness; and would not willingly displease Him for a World. And having with a Holy, Religious Veneration observ'd, approves of, is singularly well pleas'd with, that Wonder of all Wonders, the *Grace* of Almighty God, revealed by the Gospel, in giving His Eternal Son, to be the *Redeemer* of Lost Mankind; God in our Flesh manifested in the fulness of time, to do and suffer whatever Justice required, that our Sins might be pardon'd, our Persons accepted, sanctified, and glorified.

And

And *Looking unto Jesus*, doth heartily acquiesce in the Method of Salvation, ordain'd by God thro' him, intirely yields up himself to him, to be, and do, and suffer, whatever he pleases; sincerely accepts of him as an All-sufficient Saviour, submits to his Government in all things, never can be satisfied, but is in a restless Agony day and night, till he gain some good Evidence, that Christ is his, and he Christ's; spontaneously, chearfully, with a self-denying, humble, penitent Heart, venturing his All upon him for ever, in believing in him, hoping for his Sake, to obtain the Love and Favour of God, in Justification, Reconciliation, and Eternal Blessedness; and therefore deliberately, freely, with all readiness of mind, engages himself to Christ, by the Renewal of his *Baptismal Covenant*, with a serious, upright, undissembled Resolution, to stand to it, and abide by it, in despight of all Temptations, and Opposition, thro' the aid and assistance of the Spirit of Grace; praying, waiting, in Faith and Hope, to enjoy his Gracious Influences, leading into all Truth, that by it he may be made free, formed after the image of God, by his Grace, *strengthened* with all might *inwardly*, and revived by his Consolations. A Man that in order to all these good Ends, diligently examines his Conscience, searches out his particular sins, is afflicted, burthened at his very Soul for them, as an Offence to God, rather than his own Damage; uses all possible means to prevail with his Heart to relinquish them in its affections, forbearing actually to commit them, lamenting over, and reforming sinful Omissions, groans under, and is daily pained with the woful depravedness of his Nature, his very inward Bent and Inclination to Evil, the Vanity, as well as Vileness

of his thoughts, words, and deeds; accounting himself the *Chief of Sinners*, and therefore maintaining an humble self-debasing Sense of his own Unworthiness, and labours not only to desist from the Acts, but subdue the very Lusts, kill the root by mortification. A Man who lives by Faith upon the Promises for the *Communication of a Divine Nature*, *the Law in the Heart*, that he may not only do the External Work of Duty, but have a *Dutiful Heart*; from and through which Principle, he meditates, hears, reads, praises, confers about the best things, as inwardly loathing the froath, and vanity, and venome of his former Communication, and endeavours that it may be *alway savoury*, *season'd with salt*, *that it may administer to the use of edifying*, *minister Grace to the Hearers*. A Man that endeavours a right Understanding of himself, is *cloath'd with Humility*, in lowliness of mind, debasing himself before God, preferring others before himself, and *condescending to men of low degree*, and esteeming his own Graces less, his Sins greater than any mans; admiring that either God or man should favour him; and therefore with a calm dispassionate Spirit, bears Injuries, Affronts, Reproaches, any Evils that extend to himself; but can bear nothing with Unconcernedness that affronts the Divine Majesty; hath a Bridle for his Tongue, for his Heart, and with a composed Evenness of Temper, renders his Converses amiable, profitable, desireable to all; grievous, hurtful to none: In all Conditions, Companies, or Occurrences, prosperous or adverse, being the same: An ill turn will make him a Friend as *Cranmer*, and the worse the Circumstances, the better the Man; living under the power of the Spirit of *Sanctification* in Obedience, Meekness, Patience,

tience, Gentleneſs, Simplicity, godly Sincerity. A Man that can bear Indignities from all, forbear offering them to any; keeping under his Paſſions, even almoſt to an *Apathy*; keeping down his carnal Appetite, in a ſober temperate uſe of the Pleaſures of Senſe, and an Indifferency to this preſent World. A Man that ſets his Mind and Heart favourily upon Inviſibles, which he evidences by a Converſation in Heaven, and values the Wealth and Glory of the Earth, only as they deſerve, and as far as uſeful for God's Honour in Acts of Piety, the Relief of the Indigent in liberality, and the maintenance of the Reputation of his Profeſſion; with Contentment, embracing the leaſt ſhare of the World, but unſatisfiable, without a large Portion of God and Heaven. A Man that walks in his houſe with a perfect heart, putting away Evil from his Tabernacle, and advancing Holineſs in his own Relations, eſpecially to whom he is uſeful both by Counſel and Example. A Man that dares not do, or deſign, or imagine any thing unjuſt, diſhoneſt, unbecoming Chriſtianity, tho' it might gain Indemnity for his Life. Uprightneſs, Loyalty, Honeſty, Fidelity in all Promiſes, Dealings, Carriage, are his Life; therefore will he not forfeit and deſtroy it by contrary Practices. A man that has the faireſt Notices of Divine particular Love to himſelf, yet will not abuſe them to Preſumption or Arrogance, and Contempt of others; that values the favour of Heaven infinitely above the Glory, Eſteem, Riches, Pleaſures of the World; but deſpiſes not theſe as the Gifts of God: Yet does not behave himſelf unſeemly, when in the higheſt Repute with Man. Alway his Thonghts beget his Words, and his Word is his Deed, and a good Conſcience the Guide of all.

A man truly faithful to God, and his Sovereign the King. Modesty, Gravity, Seriousness, Industry, Clemency, Sedateness of Spirit, Peace of Mind being his Individual Companions and Ornaments. Yet knows he nothing of those natural or acquired, moral, or spiritual Endowments, that may recommend him to God and Man, so as to swell and huff up his Heart; he has them, as if he had them not. A Man that lives in the view of Death, and therefore dreads it not; whence 'tis, that whatever he hath or doth, or feels, or fears, or suffers, 'tis as a dying Man; and he therein possesses himself and God in Tranquility of Mind, and a quiet Rest and Contentation. He would be to others, what he expects they and God will be to him. Chiefly minds the weightiest Points of Religion, in *Faith*, *Love*, Mercy, Righteousness: Yet having done all, esteems himself an unuseful Vessel unworthy regard, as having only done Duty, and but a small degree of that neither; therefore finally flies for Refuge to the love of God, and deservings of Christ, as the sole bottom of his hopes to be saved. This is a Christian of whatever particular Denomination, *Prelatical*, *Presbyterian*, *Congregational*, &c. All Persons, all Societies of Persons thus qualified, thou art obliged, O my Soul, to respect, honour, embrace, do good unto, or thou renouncest thy Membership and Fellowship with Christ and his Body. Where-ever all the Essentials of this Christianity are received, without such intermingled Corruptions, as undermine or destroy them; so insisted upon, that without violation of Conscience (and so Christianity) thou canst not own them, there impart thy best Affections, thither direct thy serious and religious Cares, and to all, how bad soever, how hostile soever, thy Commiserations.

miſerations. I cannot Communicate with an Idolater, &c. yet I can pity him, and every poor deluded Soul, that either preſumptuouſly, or in ſimplicity, is carryed away from God. For I my ſelf am a Sinner, and ſtand in infinite need of the Compaſſions, both of GOD and Man. *Love*, *Unity*, *Peace*, are Matters of ſo excellent a Nature; Uncharitableneſs, Schiſm, Diſſention, contain ſo much of Hell, that theſe are to be relinquiſh'd, thoſe purſu'd all poſſible ways conſiſtent with integrity of Conſcience; that is, conſiſtent with Allegiance to God: For Conſcience is nothing, except in Subordination and Allegiance to God.

## CHAP. VIII.

*The Subject of Comfort, Honours God's Diſcipline.*

6. THE Author of this Pſalm, was a Man that embrac'd a juſt and equitable Senſe, and made a benign and fair Repreſentation of both the Inſtructive Diſcipline, and alſo the Diſpenſations of God; his ſpecial Teachings, his ſevere Providences. *Ver.* 12. *Oh the Bleſſednesſes* (Vocatively rather than Nominatively) [ הַגֶּבֶר ] *of the mighty* [*ſtrong, able, luſty,*] *Man, whom* [ תְּיַסְּרֶנּוּ ] *thou ſhalt or wilt* [Inſtruct Correct] *him*, (a Pleonaſm of the Pronoun) *and ſhalt or wilt teach him out of thy Law.* So *Ver.* 10. [ הַיֹּסֵר ], The [Teacher Chaſtiſer] *of the Nations*, &c. The Primary Signification of the Word, is to *Teach* or *Inſtruct*; which is very accommodate to the ſcope of the Place; and the whole Paragraph may be rendred thus: *He that inſtructeth the Nations, ſhall not be reaſon,* [Iſai. 1. 18.] *argue, or diſpute,* [Job 23. 7.] *plead,* [Mic. 6. 2.] even *He that teacheth man knowledge, the LORD knowing the reaſonings* (1 *Cor.* 3. 10. *Luke* 9. 46.) *of man that they are vanity. Oh the bleſſednesſes of the migh-*

*mighty whom thou wilt instruct. Oh Jah, and teach him out of thy Law.* The Authority of the received Translation with the *Targum* and *Syriack*, and some learned Interpreters is the only Argument against this reading of the words; nothing in the Original or the tenour of the Psalmists Discourse, but rather the contrary. And even this sence will administer something toward the compleating the *Character*.

The *Psalmist* then was one that accounted it a singular happiness to be taught of God: to be throughly instructed in Gods law by God himself; that is to be effectually brought under the power and led into the practice of Holiness, whereof the Law is the Rule; for God's Teachings are not only notional and doctrinal, but practical and effective of Obedience. 'Tis all one as if he had said, *Oh the blessednesses of the man in whose heart thou writest thy Law*, and thereby principlest for and impellest to a holy life. This is the Covenant way to Peace. *Isai.* 54. 13. *All thy Children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy Children*; although at present thou beest *afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, V.* 11. Oh! this is happy indeed, the very Basis and Foundation of all Blessedness; without which 'tis impossible for a Man not to be finally miserable. No Felicity is attainable if God do not Make his Laws vital Principles in our Souls, which is the tenour of the New Covenant, recited, *Heb.* 8. 10, 11. through the exceeding great and precious promises whereof, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. *We are made partakers of a divine nature, viz.* a living, over-ruling Law within, a transcript of the Law eternal upon our hearts. Without Grace there can be no true Peace, without truth no Grace; truth in the light of it to gird up the loyns of our minds, truth in the life of it, the girdle of integrity in our hearts, without Illumination no

Com-

Comfort, without Sincerity no Salvation. They must combine, and be undivorcedly espoused together, or farewel all true Peace. For to be taught true and sound Doctrine, and to be led into the understanding of all the Divine Commands, though Christ himself be the Schoolmaster, (*Luk.* 13. 26. *thou hast taught in our Streets*) will contribute nothing to the happiness, but much to the misery of that Man, who never feels the Power of those instructions, renewing his Nature and reforming his Life. But if by the gracious Influences of Heaven, the Precepts of the Law and Gospel become efficacious, to mould and form us into universal Goodness, all the divided or joynt Confederations of the Wit, Policy, Power, Virulence, Rage, Malice and Fury, of both the Elements of Misery, Earth and Hell, to mischieve us, can never make us really miserable. Whereof (not to insist upon our blessed Redeemer) let *Job* be a Witness. Never had Satan so large a Permission (not to say Commission) to spend all the Artillery of his Madness and Malice against any Man, that ever we read of, as against this incomparable Pattern of Patience; never did such a whirlpool of Calamities, suck in, and swallow up in a Moment, and at unawares any mortal Man so singled out, before, or after him. All his external Comforts Shipwrack'd, his whole body, from top to toe, an universal Ulcer and Mass of Rottenness, except his Organs of Speech, which the Devil reserv'd in soundness, for a malicious purpose, his end in all the rest. Nothing left him but an *Eve*, the Serpent's Instrument to tempt and torture him, *Job* 2. 9. and 19. 17. The very inward quiet of his mind ravisht way, in such a degree that it did commit a Rape on his bodily rest, and made all his Comforts and Comforters miserable, *Job* 6.

4.

4. and 7. 4, 13, 14, 15. *&c.* Yet for all this, the Man was bleſſed and made a bleſſed End. He was under the ſpecial regard of Heaven, dear to God, under his peculiar care, and fatherly Diſcipline of Love, and therefore not really (although he imagin'd himſelf to be miſerable,) but truly happy.

On the other hand take an *Ahab* in the affluence of all worldly Delights, Riches, Honours; triumphing in Victory over the moſt potent Kings, 1 King. 20. Poſſeſſing his coveted Vineyard, *Ch.* 21. 16. dwelling in a Palace of Ivory, Ch. 22. 39. enjoying all imaginable carnal ſatisfactions; Yet untaught, untutor'd by Heaven, deſtitute of that which would have been the faireſt Jewel of his Crown, the Grace of God, the inward ſanctifying and ſaving Illuminations of the divine Spirit, therefore continuing an Enemy to God and Goodneſs: and was this Man happy or bleſſed? Was he not accurſed of God and moſt miſerable in the midſt of all his external Felicities. To have a Heaven in his Houſe, a Paradiſe in his Vineyard, and a Hell in his Conſcience, a lamentable Happineſs, from which *good Lord deliver us.*

Be not thou envious, O my Soul, at the enſnaring proſperity of the one, nor offended with the improſperous uprightneſs of the other; but earneſtly implore thoſe Covenant-teachings of the Lord, *Joh.* 6. 45. *Iſai.* 54. 13. *Jer.* 31. 33. which being the firſt ſeminal Principles of the new nature, will impower thee to live unto God. Wilt thou be content with ſo faint and evanid a light in thy upper Regions, as will make no reflection towards Heaven, nor beget a greater warmth, than will permit thee to freeze in the midſt of Summer? Oh! aſpire after thoſe divine Irradiations, which convey an influence, more extenſive, and efficacious than

than themſelves, which awakening or creating a central Fire, in all, the very droſſieſt or deepeſt ramifications or branchings of thy thoughts, of thy affections alſo, thy inclinations and imaginations may by a divine *Projection* convert and concoct them into Gold, *Rev.* 3. 18. *i. e.* give them a gracious tincture; of moral vertues and motions, make them ſpiritual Gifts and Graces, and render them acceptable to God. Be not ſatisfied till thou ſeeſt, and knoweſt things as they are, in their real nature; being apprehenſive that pure metaphyſical Notions, that are not affective, nor lead to practice, for all their tenuity and levity will never mount thee to Heaven, without inward moral ſenſations, ſpiritual touches and taſts of Truths, in their internal Life. Fine and thin ſpeculations, like cobwebs may take, and take with Flies, aery, volatile Wits, and Fancies; but nothing is good in Religion, which does not catch and overmaſter rational Affections, reduce the will of Man into an Harmony with the Will of God, and better the Life. Oh be not in love with a notional Religion. Let the Holy Spirit that illuſtrious Ray of Divine Love, reflected upon, and from the Son of Righteouſneſs, deſcend into thy bowels, dwell, and act in thy very inmoſt heart, by his Light to create Life. Be in love with no knowledge but that which is of a transforming power, and tendency, that by its vertue thou may'ſt be intirely renewed after the Imagine of God. That Knowledge which will introduce Faith; that Faith, which will work by Love; that Love, which to the reſt will add (as 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 6, 7.) *Vertue, Temperance, Patience, Godlineſs, Brotherly-kindneſs*; and in ſumm all the Elements of a holy converſation; that, and that only, will be introductive of ſolid Peace and Conſolation.

But

But this hath all been ſpoke only upon ſuppoſition of a different, yet very proper Tranſlation of the Words in *V.* 10. and. 12. Which are rendred [*chaſtize*]. Now muſt we Proceed upon this authorized Verſion; and 'tis certain the Words will allow it as among other Places is demonſtrable from 1 *Kin.* 12. 11, 14. *My Father chaſtiſed you with whips*, &c. *Pſal.* 118. 18. *Chaſtening the Lord hath chaſtened me, but hath not given me over to death.* Here the word cannot ſignify to *teach*, or *inſtruct*, in a proper Sence. Yet in the place I diſcourſe upon there's nothing to enforce this Sence, but rather the other, as the *Engliſh Annotator* obſerves. Only the *Syriack Verſion*, the *Chaldee Paraphraſt*, *Piſcator*, *Vatablus*, *Ainſworth*, &c. render it here as we do [*chaſten*]. And if it receive the former Sence, may it not ſeem reſtrain'd to ſuch Inſtructions, as in a peculiar manner qualifie Men patiently to bear and improve Afflictions? This Sence will be favoured by that clauſe in the following Verſe, which is declarative of the end and uſe of theſe Teachings [*finding reſt in the day of adverſity.*] Paraphraſe the whole thus. *Oh the bleſſednesſes of the mighty man* [*Pſal.* 33. 16.] *whom thou ſo inſtructeſt inwardly by thy Spirit, and teacheſt Outwardly by thy Law in the Miniſtry of the Word and other Ordinances*, * *as to engage and enable him with an even compoſed Spirit, reſting in the good pleaſure of thy Goodneſs, and with patience to indure Adverſity.* Thus I make account 'tis a parallel to *Jam.* 1. 12 *Bleſſed is the Man that* [Μακαριος happy] (not ſuffereth meerly, but) [ὑπομένει] *patiently endureth Temptation*, [or Trial, πειρασμὸν] *for being* [δόκιμος] *approved,*

* So Calvin.

*For the Subſtantive derived from it, viz.* [ὑπομονὴ] *is rendred Patience*, V 3 4. *and* ch. 5. 11. [μακροθυμίαν

ved, *be ſhall receive the Crown of Life, &c.* It ſeems to be an alluſion to the *Iſthmick or Olympick Games* in *Greece*; where if any doubt did ariſe about the Victory, the *Agoniſts* or *Contenders* did appeal to the Judges, and he who by their Suffrage or Judgment was [δόκιμος] approv'd, did receive the Garland or Crown. Thus here, *Bleſſed is the man whom thou ſo diſciplineſt, and learneſt, as to give reſt or quiet, ſedateneſs or ſettlement of mind, or appeaſement* (*Prov.* 15. 18. the ſame word) *of all turbulent motions, in the working raging ſea of his Paſſions and Affections which otherwiſe cannot be quiet, compoſed, and reſt,* (*Iſai.* 57. 20. the ſame word again) *till, or while the Pit be digged for the wicked.* For as Dr. *Hammond* well obſerves, if it be underſtood of external reſt, or freedom from the days of Evil the word [עד] is not properly tranſlated [*until*]. For that ſuppoſes the reſt in being, before the removal, and in the very time of diſreſt, or oppreſſion, or adverſity by the wicked, and the reſt to terminate, or end, when the Wicked are deſtroyed. But [עד] is tranſlated [*While*] *Job* 1. 16, 17, 18. *While he was yet ſpeaking, &c.* and yet more accommodately to this place, [*When*] Jonah 4. 2. *Was not this my ſaying,* [*when*] *I was yet in my own Country, &c.* Thus here, when the pit of corruption (as the word ſignifies) ſhall be digged for the Wicked, the Lord's bleſſed ones ſhall reſt from the days of Adverſity; Then is the ſeaſon for it. This literal proper Sence ſeems more ſuitable than *Calvin*'s figurative: For *moral* Reſt anſwers not the Letter of the Text as well as *civil*. 'Tis reſt *from*, not *in the days of evil*, as it ſhould, if the moral ſence [for quiet of mind] obtain, yet I think

τὸς ὑπομενοντας] *we count happy (or bleſs) the patiently indureing* [*or biding under,*] *ye have heard of* [ὑπομονὴν] *the Patience of* Job.

I think there may be a commodious Sence given of the Words, retaining the [*until*] which is the only Basis of the moral sence; and still interpret the words concerning Political Rest. For [*until*] does not alway signifie the cessation of the preceding State, upon the introduction of that which it relates to. Hereof there are multitudes of Instances, *Rom.* 5. 13. *Until the Law Sin was in the World*; but it did not cease to be when the Law came, *Rev.* 2. 25. *Hold fast till I come.* Must they let go their hold then? But to confine my self to the Hebr. עד *Isai.* 22. 14. *This Iniquity shall not be purged from you till you die.* If not 'till then 'twill never. Not to wander out of this Book of Psalms, *Psal.* 112. 8. *He shall not be affraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies*; and sure his fearlesness will not determin then, *Psal.* 110. 1. *Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* Must Christ forsake God's right hand, when that is accomplished? I'll add no more. It cannot then by necessary consequence be concluded from the [*until*] here, that the Rest or Quiet of the Blessed, shall expire when the Wicked perish; it rather infers a more eminent degree of it. So also it does in the cited places, denote and import an answerable amplification in the succeeding state of what was in the foregoing, if it be capable of gradation, as sure *David's* fearlesness would be greater after his desire was accomplished upon his Enemies, than before. Let that interpret this, *He shall be fearless before, even when his enemies hope to have their desire of him*, much more when he has his of them. Thus God will give those whom he graciously instructs, and teaches, real quiet and rest, both when the wicked *Reigns*, and when he is *Ruin'd*. So that I make it a privilege and part

of

of Bleſſedneſs granted by ſpecial indulgence to theſe to be ſecured from trouble in troublous Times; to have a good day when others (not ſo taught of God) meet with an evil day, to be hid in the day of God's Anger, to be preſerved from the Malice and perſecution of the Wicked. This ſometimes the Lord vouchſafes to his Children, ſuch like Mercy was promiſed but three Pſalms before, *viz. Pſal.* 91. throughout, ſo *Pſal.* 12.7,8. *Pſal.* 37. *Iſ.*26. 20, 21, *&c.* and many other Places. God reſerves ſome in ſafety to behold the deſtruction of Perſecutors; has a *Zoar* for a *Lot*; a *Pella* for the Chriſtians, *&c.* If this were not ſo, all Good Men might be extinct, and the Gates of Hell prevail againſt the Church of Chriſt. 'Tis alſo upon good reaſon. For the end of Affliction is Reformation. If God meet with ſo good Proficients, under his inſtructive Diſcipline, as will and do learn every Leſſon he teaches, there will be no need of the Rod, and he who does not afflict willingly will not bring into theſe Trials except need be, 1 *Pet.* 1.6. But this I will no further inſiſt upon.

Let the *Engliſh* Tranſlation then obtain, and it gives us this Point, That in the ſenſe of the *Pſalmiſt*, *'twas a bleſſed thing to be under God's correcting Diſcipline, or inſtructive Chaſtenings, as a means to prepare for reſt, when Inſtruments of Divine Severity were to be deſtroyed*; *Reſt* in this *World*, when *Judgment returns to Righteouſneſs, and the Upright follow it*; and eſpecially in the World to come, when all the Wicked ſhall be lodged in the *Pit of Hell*. For the days of Eternity are to the Wicked days of Adverſity indeed; and to enjoy Everlaſting *Reſt* then, is a Bleſſing unutterable. This good Man ſaw nothing in Affliction that could make a Man unhappy. He entertain'd ſuch a favoura-

vourable opinion of God's rigours to his Children, that beholding by Faith the good and happy fruit of them, he admires the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe to whom ſo great Evils iſſue ſo well; and therefore we may juſtly ſuppoſe, would not be diſcourag'd by the bitterneſs of the Croſs, nor driven by it to an unwillingneſs to conſort himſelf with the ſuffering People of God. Would not he put in for his ſhare of that Bleſſedneſs, which deſcended from Heaven, though it coſt him a participation of that wretchedneſs, which was the product of the Rage and Fury of the World? *Chuſing rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of Sin for a ſeaſon; as having reſpect to the Recompence of Reward, everlaſting Bleſſedneſs and Reſt*, with *Moſes*, *Heb.* 11. And indeed this is an admirable Comfort in all Tribulations, to conſider that there is a reſerve of eternal Joy and Peace, the ſweeteſt the fulleſt; that there are *Bleſſednеſſes*, the Bleſſedneſs of this Life, the Bleſſedneſs of the Life to come, laid up in ſtore for the Servants of God, though accurſed by Men in this World. If together with the Rod that we feel, he adminiſter a Word that we may hear, *Mic.* 6. 9. and under his Corrections ſeal our Inſtructions, if by his Providences he ſubdue our Wills to his Precepts, and by the ſadneſs of our Countenances make our Hearts better; if he diſcover to us the ſunſhine of his Favour and Love through the dark cloud of Affliction, and bring down a Heaven of Happineſs or Bleſſedneſs to alleviate the tormenting Purgatory of our Tribulations, whether from Men or Devils; this ſure will bow our Hearts to ſuch a degree of æquanimous ſubmiſſion and reſignedneſs to God, that we ſhall not only ſit down in a patient

tient and quiet Contentation, but be able to rejoyce in the good pleasure of his Goodness, although we smart under it, and he that is repleniſhed with Content and Joy, is never deſtitute of Conſolation.

Be not then diſpleaſed O my Soul, that thy Father in Heaven brings thee under the diſcipline of his Family on Earth. If thy Afflictions be light do not deſpiſe or make light of them, if they be heavy and grievous, do not faint under them. Bleſſedneſs is a thing of ſo weighty Conſideration, ſo great Moment, that 'tis madneſs to forfeit it, by ſlighting an evil of little moment, folly to reject all ſupport from it, under a burthen more intolerable. Let the gracious deſigns of Heaven reconcile thee to the very *Antipathies* of thy Nature, and render all thoſe divine Methods, not only ſupportable but eaſie and amiable, which have a tendency to endear God, and Holineſs; although for the preſent they do not adminiſter matter of Joy but Sorrow. *Heb.* 12. 11. *The peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs* will abundantly compenſate the grievouſneſs of all Calamities; wherefore [ἀνορθώσατε] lift up [παρειμένας] the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees. Stretch out thy ſelf Heaven-ward to apprehend and reach by Faith, thoſe unconceivable Pleaſures and Joys, wherein the Miſeries of this Life will iſſue, if thou makeſt not viſible but inviſible things thy ſcope in this World. Thy Sin or Guilt which merits thy Sufferings is indeed ſinful [καθ' ὑπερβολήν] *i. e.* beyond all bounds of Thought and Imagination, that thy higheſt Conceptions cannot overſhoot in their Notions of its real evil in it ſelf. Let it be to thee proportionably grievous. But theſe Fruits of thy Sins, *viz.* thy Sufferings,

if thou live by Faith upon Invisibles, will work for thee an eternal weight of Glory [κατ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν] from *hyperbole* even unto *hyperbole*, that the glory in its superlative excellency does doubly transcend the unfathomable malignity that is in Sin, and infinitely overshoot the bitterness in the Affliction; the weight of Glory being commensurate to its Eternity, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. *The* [*transient*] *momentany lightness of our Affliction, worketh out for us, an above all expression, conception, comparison eternal weight of Glory.* Will not the reviews hereof engage thee, O my Soul, with a kind and dutiful resentment, to accept of the punishment of thy Sin, and exterminate all harsh and unbecoming Conceptions of that God, whose hatred to thy Sin evidenced in his severe Providences, is alway accompanied with a singular love to thy Person, whose Eternal Salvation he would compass by the everlasting destruction of thy Sin. Oh be thou ambitious to demonstrate thy self a good disposition'd Child, under that nurture of Love, wherein he evidences himself to be a tender hearted Father. Is it only a gentle Correction, not eternal Damnation, the desert of thy Sin? Is it only a profitable Medicine, though it might have been Poyson thy final bane and ruin? Is it only the scarifying a gangrenated Limb, which might have been the scalding and burning for ever of both Body and Soul in unquenchable Fire, unappeasable Wrath? Oh love the Lord for the mitigation, for the transmutation of thy Penance. That thou art in a state where thy Sufferings may be sanctified, therefore are in Mercy; where they may be terminated, therefore are no ground of Desperation; where they may be recompenced, and shall undoubtedly issue in endless Blessedness,

it

if thy ſtubbornneſs and non-improvement hinder not. Take it well and kindly at thoſe gracious Hands, that draw the flaming Sword, and turn it every way againſt thy Corruptions, (which ſhut thee out) and this on purpoſe, that thou mayſt be received by the Lord Pure and Innocent into Paradiſe; who by thine experimental knowledge of this evil of ſuffering, will create in thee a ſaving knowledge of good, and through theſe Fruits of the Tree of the Croſs, lead thee to the Tree of Life.

## CHAP. IX.

*The Subject of Comfort, Eyes God in all things.*

7. THis Man of God enjoy'd and liv'd under much experience of divine Goodneſs and gracious Providence. Under all that happen'd he ey'd and own'd the Hand of God. 1. *In Affliction.* Ver. 17. *Unleſs the Lord had been my help, my Soul had almoſt dwelt in ſilence.* Ver. 22. *The Lord is my defence, and my God is the Rock of my Refuge.* 2. *In Temptation. When I ſaid my foot ſlippeth, thy Mercy, O Lord, held me up,* ver. 18. 3. In both *ver.* 19. the Text, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy Comforts delight my Soul.* A Man of common Principles would have look'd no farther than ſecond Cauſes, and the activity of Inſtruments and Means in his deliverance from Death, *ver.* 17. Than his own Prudence, Caution, Foreſight, Care, and Endeavour in preſervation from *falling*, *v.* 18. Than his own reaſonings and wiſe conduct of his Affections in the calm and ſerenity of his Mind, *v.* 19. But this Holy Soul aſcribes all to Divine Good-

neſs. And indeed to ſuch a Man nothing is accidental; he is never at a loſs for the cauſe of any occurrent, when he has not the leaſt proſpect of the agency of any thing on Earth, he can find out a ſupreme mover in Heaven, to whom nothing falls out by chance, without either the foreſight of his Intelligence, or the conduct of his Wiſdom, or the determination of his Will, or the interpoſal of his Power, or the liberty of his Permiſſion, which though no cauſe at all properly, but only that called *ſine quâ non*, which is but *Fatua*, yet is governed by his Providence, and all the poſſibilities thereof viſible to his Preſcience. God is more concern'd in the World, than the Artificer in a Clock, who when 'tis ſet together, ſet up, and agoing, forſakes it. He is ſure little converſant in Scripture, that imagines the Deity only a general cauſe, who having conſtituted things with ſuch and ſuch particular Natures, Propenſions, Biaſſes, leaves them to run out their courſe without further Concurrence and Solicitude, than to preſerve them in the being, conſtitution and activity he firſt gave them. There's nothing ſo mean ſo fortuitous, but the Scripture intitles God to it, either in way of Efficiency, Direction, Ordination, or Permiſſion. If it be Good, Natural or Moral he is the doer; ſo if evil Natural, if evil Moral, though he abhor it, cannot effect it, or concur to it as ſuch, yet can he, does he direct and order it, to ſuch ends, as are conſiſtent with his Wiſdom, Juſtice, Holineſs and Goodneſs; which he well foreknows how to do, therefore hinders not its exiſtence, as he eaſily could do without any violence to Nature, blemiſh to his Government, or infringement of the Liberty of his Creatures. For to me 'tis no little Myſtery, that although God

God be able to form a Rational Nature, with liberty of Will and Prudence, ſo to manage it, that it ſhall at no time be compell'd to offer violence to its own freedom, but in every act proceed with an even, gentle, ſweet Spontaneity, according to the dictates of its own finite Underſtanding; yet that the infinite Intelligence and Prudence of the Divine Nature, muſt be thought unable and inſufficient, by the reaſonable Underſtanding and Will, to elicite, manage and guide theſe very humane Actions ſo as to preſerve the ſame Liberty inviolable. Let ſomething be allow'd to Infiniteneſs; ſure it can do whatever Finiteneſs can, if it be not to its diſparagement. If I can bring about my own reſolute and fixed Purpoſes, without prejudice to my own or others Liberty, ſure boundleſs Wiſdom and Power can tell how to bring about its determinations by the liberty of the Creature. A Reverend Judicious Divine, my Relation, told me, that for experiment ſake, to try the power of an over-maſtering Imagination, he had oft requeſted ſuch things of ſome Perſons, in whom he had no Intereſt at all, which he knew they had an averſation to, uſing no Reaſons, Arguments, Motives, Importunities at all further than the bare propoſal; only engaging himſelf ſtrongly to fanſie, that he ſhould obtain his deſire, and he ſeldom fail'd to prevail. I never had the curioſity to make a tryal, but am apt to think there may be ſomething in't, upon conſideration of the ſtrange effects of the Mothers imagination upon her enwombed Infant, as to both Impreſſions on its Body, and Antipathies in its Mind; the tranſpiring animal Spirits, modify'd and mov'd ſtrongly by a material Faculty, may intermingle with thoſe of a differing Body, and over-rule their

weaker Modifications and Motions, and thereby the material Faculty that acted them, as in Sympathetick Cures, and the votatil Particles of *Vitriol*, &c. Crude or calcin'd, do mix with the extravasated vital Spirits, and return with them to their Fountain. I confess these act only as Physical Causes, and cannot vary in their effects of themselves, though other external Causes may thwart them. And what if a Man allow some such like thing to Spiritual Natures. By what impressions they can communicate their Minds to one another, by what impulses they bow one anothers Wills, we know not but only the Effects. God never fails to obtain the free voluntary Obedience of Angels. And the more determin'd their Wills are the more free. The Devil acts with less Liberty than a Glorified Saint; and a Holy Angel, with more than a self-determining Man, who has both liberty of Contrariety and Contradiction, can do both Good and Evil, Act and not Act. Well if my Imagination further, if my short defective Understanding can, the one make such impresses, the other produce such weighty momentous Reasons as shall sway my own and others Wills, to an inhesitant and free compliance, shall I not give that deference to the unfathomable Intellect and Reason of God, as to suppose it endued with Ability, to suggest such things, as shall bow mine own or others Wills to a ready, spontaneous, ingenuous Concurrence, than any thing can, that is deduced merely out of the promptuary of mine own Mind. I find my freedom in acting is gradually more or less intense, according to the satisfaction of my Reason. And if the Reason of God which is boundless cannot induce a more ample satisfaction, than the Reason of

of a Creature which is but lame and imperfect; and if he cannot with as much Facility without all impeach to our Liberty, lead our Minds to the Contemplation thereof, as in the use of the empire our selves have over them, we can do; if he cannot also more throughly excite, acuminate, quicken and enlarge our considering Powers, freely to engage, I have done. 'Tis not strange therefore that the Scripture ascribes all to God as the Origin of every individual Motion. I find holy Men in every, though never so fortuitous an effect, of a spontaneous Agent, to look at God. I'll not instance in other than *David*. And, 1. for evil Events. As he intimates a possibility of *Saul*'s being excited against him by God, 1 *Sam.* 26. 19. and was foretold that the *Lord* would raise up evil against him out of his own House, and take his Wives and give them to *Absalom*, under the notion of his Neighbour, 2 *Sam.* 12. 11. So even when he was cursed by *Shimei*, he owns it as from God, 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. Not that he supposed God had a hand in the sin of the Act, but order'd it as a part of the punishment threatned for his own Sin. 2. Good Events of all kinds he more frequently ascribes to God. Does he conquer his Enemies? *'Tis the Lord that lets him see his desire upon them*, Psal. 59. 10. *and subdueth the People under him*, Psal. 18. 47, 48. See the whole Psalm; *and smites his Enemies in their hinder parts*, Psal. 78. 66. Do his Friends own and anoint and crown him King? He entitles God to it, *Psal.* 21. 3. *When his Father and Mother forsake him, the Lord takes him up*, Psal. 27. 10. Is he secur'd in a strong City? *'Tis the Lord's marvellous kindness*, Psal. 31. 21. What do I enumerating Particulars? every Psalm is an Instance. And indeed were it not so,

*Prayer*

*Prayer* would be mere *Mockery*, and *Praise Hypocriſie*; and that of *Seneca* would be better *Divinity*, than we are taught by the Scriptures, (which yet to ſuppoſe is moſt horridly Blaſphemous) *Per maxima acto viro turpe eſt etiamnum Deos fagitare. Quid votis opus eſt? Fac te ipſe fœlicem.* Let thoſe Engliſh it that allow it. *Epiſt.* 31.

Now when a Man does thus in all Events take notice of the Finger of God, and thereby give him the glory of his Efficiency, he is in a diſpoſition for renewed Experiments of the Divine Power and Goodneſs in Peace and Joy. Where the Glory will be given to God he will grant the fulleſt and ſweeteſt taſts of his Graciouſneſs. But who will loſe a Benefit? 'Tis loſt where no likelyhood of any grateful Acknowledgement. Unthankfulneſs is the moſt hateful of Sins. *Ingratum ſi dixeris, omnia dixeris.* If God muſt not reap Praiſes, he will not ſow Mercies. Not that he needs our Gratitude, but that we muſt own our Benefactor, and teſtifie our advances in Love, when by new Inſtances he teſtifies his Love to us. Nevertheleſs this Love of ours is not profitable to God, but highly (as all other Graces) to our ſelves. Our own Advantage and Intereſt is alway at the bottom of our Duty; which indeed can add nothing to God, is nothing to him, as neither can our Iniquity detract from him, or hurt him. His good will towards us moves him to take care, that it may be well with us, therefore doth he follow us with his tender Mercies, and richeſt Bleſſings, that we may proceed upon ingenuous Motives, in our obſervance of him, and obedience to him; and may not be obnoxious to the check of *Satan*, or our own *Job* 34.

own Conſciences, for ſervility of Spirit in that work, wherein conſiſts our Liberty, Honour, and Happineſs. Indeed we are not really good if we be not ingenuouſly good; nor act at all for God if we act not from a filial diſpoſition. *Love* is every Grace and Virtue, that Spirit of Life which as an univerſal Cauſe diffuſes its benign animating Influences, through all the Regions of true Goodneſs and Honeſty. All in us that lives to God, every holy Diſpoſition, every gracious Habit, is only a diſtinct particular modification of Love. Even as the varieties of Nature, in thoſe innumerable differences of Plants, ſenſitive Creatures and Men in their Bodies, are but Earthly Particles diverſly modified, formed, faſhioned, and qualified. Hence Love is ſaid to be the fulfilling of the Law, *Rom.* 13. 10. But without Love to be Good is impoſſible, 1 *Cor.* 13. Where this Grace dwells, God dwells alſo; and the Soul inſpirited by it dwells in God, 1 *Joh.* 4. 8, 16. The more of Love therefore the more of God. He will never be out of our Eye if he be thus in our Hearts. Love there will command our Looks. 'Twas the dominion of this Grace in his Soul, that mov'd the Pſalmiſt to make ſuch honourable mention here of the *Love and Graciouſneſs of God*, in his aid and ſuſtentation; 'twas this that in his diſtreſs inclin'd him to take Sanctuary in God; and own all the Spiritual Refreſhments that ſolaced his Heart, as derivations from God; and engaged him to devolve all the Glory thereof upon God. And how ſhould that Soul do other that has all in God?

Haſt thou then, Oh my Soul, evermore and in every occurrent, an Eye toward Heaven, and by thy acknowledgement of the Finger of God

God in every thing that befalls thee, Doſt thou honour his Providence, indeavour to reliſh his Goodneſs, and make ſome progreſs in thine affectionate pantings after him, complacency in him, reſolution for him, and dutifulneſs to him? O let every thing remind thee of his everlaſting Commiſeration, that in thy loſt Eſtate remembred thee, gave Blood for thy Ranſom, the Blood of God. *Acts* 20. 28. *The time of thy lothing was the time of his Love*, Eze. 16. 5, 8. *He loved thee out of the Pit of Corruption*, Iſa. 38. 17. *He hath prevented thee with the Bleſſings of Goodneſs*, Pſal. 21. 3. *He redeemeth thy Life from Deſtruction, and crowneth thee with loving Kindneſs and tender Mercies*, Pſal. 103. 4. *He hath not dealt with thee after thy Sins, nor rewarded thee according to thy Iniquities*, ver. 10. Therefore, ver. 1, 2. *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me Bleſs his Holy Name. Bleſs the Lord, Oh my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.* Hallelujah.

## CHAP. X.

### *The Subject of Comfort, Seeks it ſolely in God.*

THus much of the Character deduced from the Context, there only remains one thing out of the Text it ſelf, *Viz.*

*The Pſalmiſt was a Man, who diſcern'd ſuch an emptineſs, and inſufficiency in all inferiour Contentments, as to ſeek no relief from them, nor take up with any in them, as his reſt in Trouble; but in deepeſt anxiety and diſtreſs, did look for, and find all his comfort ſolely in and from God:* This is the very ſubſtance and marrow of the Verſe. Indeed the whole Pſalm is a Teſtimony of his ceaſing from the Creature,

Creature, from Man, in a believing and affectionate recourſe to God: Where-ever he caſt his Eye upon Earth, the Inſcription was Vanity and Vexation. A deluge of Sin and Miſery covered the World, that like *Noah*'s Dove he could find no reſt for the ſole of his Foot below, therefore does he direct his courſe toward Heaven. Thus *Pſal.* 55. 6. *Oh that I had wings like a Dove, for then I would flee away and be at reſt:* But Reſt is not a Denizen of this World. Nothing but the Heaven of Heavens is at reſt, and here does he fix only. There was a *Windy Storm and Tempeſt* without, as *Pſal.* 55. 8. and which is worſe, a Tumult and Combuſtion within in his thoughts. A Man may eſcape from External Confuſions; but how ſhall he fly from himſelf? If he be out of the reach of all the *Blood-ſuckers* on Earth, and all the Furies in Hell; yet be dog'd and haunted with his own turbulent, ungovernable Cogitations, he needs no other Tormenters. This Holy Man was thus doubly diſtreſt; a Storm Abroad and an Earthquake at home rendred his Condition moſt dolorous: But for both he hath [ἐν μέγα]: he goes not about with the Foxes of this World to relieve himſelf with ſubtle Stratagems and Wiles, by carnal Shifts and Policies, *a Vanity toſſed to and fro by them that ſeek Death: No, his one great Refuge is to get aloft, to aſcend to God.* Here is his *Defence* from outward aſſaults, *v.* 22. Here is his *Eaſe* in the Torment and Mutiny within; *thy Comforts delight my Soul.* Nothing can really comfort without God, or any further than as it leads to God. The Creatures are but dry Breaſts and a miſcarrying Womb. The empty Ciſterns will ſooner be filled with the Tears of the diſappointed Hopeleſs, than diſtil upon, or repleniſh and fill their Souls, with the

the refreshing Dews of true Consolation. 'Tis in vain to look for living Comforts amongst dead Enjoyments. There's no Life or vital Influence in any thing, to enable it to quiet a troubled Soul, if God be not in it: He is the Soul of all real Contentment. In Separation from him there can be no Heaven; *i. e.* no Life, no Peace, no Rest, no Glory; all's only Dream and Fancy, and will vanish into Smoak and Fire; yet such as is outer Darkness: And if without him, there can be no Heaven above, much less below in the mind of Man, least of all in the outward Objects of Sense, and carnal Affection, which the Men of the World make their gods and adore. Truth is, whatever they pant after and love in the Creature, is a Shadow, a Counterfeit God. I was going to say, even that which they wickedly dote on below, is only a presumptive Excellency of God: For no Appetite can be taken with Evil, as such; it never solicits us in its own form, but only in the disguise of goodness. Real, it has none it self, therefore is only good in a Vizor, or Mask like a Devil in the habit of an Angel of Light. *Omne malum fundatur in bono:* When it wooes our Affections it brings some visible or apparent good, to speak for it as being in it self likely to meet with nothing but abhorrence. The apparent good is Pleasure, Profit, Honour, the Worlds Trinity; these are the Baits to our Affections. Now the perfection of these is Heaven, and God: Pure and undrossy Pleasure, and fulness of Joy, *Psal.* 16. ult; solid and immarcessible Treasures, Riches, and Gain, *Matth.* 6. 20. 1 *Tim.* 6. 19. *Ephes.* 3. 8. *Phil.* 1. 21. *Luk.* 12. 33. *Rom.* 2. 4. and 9. 22. and 11. 3. *Ephes.* 1. 7. and 2. 4. *Phil.* 4. 19. *Substantial and Royal Honours*; whence God so often is stiled

ed a King, and Heaven a Kingdom, into which all that are admitted are Crowned as well as the King himself. In short, God is the most pleasing, yea infinitely pleasing, profitable, honourable, honouring Good; the Fountain of all Honour. 'Tis true, the Profits, Pleasures, and Honours of this World are quite of another *Genius*, Sensitive and Sensual, not Rational and Spiritual: Yet I hold, that if the Spiritual Bodies in Heaven, 1 *Cor.* 15. 44. be endowed with Sense as 'tis probable (*Job* 19. 26, 27. *Rev.* 1. 7. Seeing will infer the rest, External and Internal) even sense it self will receive in Heaven and God, and the most ample Ravishing Satisfaction, in all its possible Capacities, both outward and inward, in Compensation for all those Mortifications and Miseries, wherewith it hath been Cruciated in this Life, even as the Body in Hell, in all its sensible Possibilities is Tormented, as a just Recompence for its Communion with the Soul in all sinful Sensualities. Indeed the sinful Sensuality shall not, cannot have place in Heaven: Not a Man there will desire it, not one need it, but all Everlastingly abhor it. 'Twould be the most unspeakable Torment to those Spiritual Bodies and Divine Souls. The Body there does not so much affect the Soul, as the Soul the Body, and God both. The Spring of all Satisfaction is in God, derived from him to the Soul, from the Soul to the Sense and Body; and whatever Sense does introduce is of the same alloy and quality. There can be no Sensations of Delight in any thing, but what is really refreshing to those pure sinless Spirits: What things soever would be disgustful to the Sanctity of the Soul, would therefore be Torturous to its ever Sympathizing Individual Companion, the Body; which Torture,

Torture, since 'tis utterly Incompatible with Heaven; hence carnal Sensualities are there absolutely impossible. But then Spiritual and Metaphorical Sensualities are the very Life and Soul of Heaven, perceptible by the Spiritual Body, as well as the Soul: I cannot exclude all Natural. The Body in all its Possibilites of sense will be in a perpetual ravishing, rapturous Ecstacy of Delight, through the overflow of those Cœlestial Joys, which evermore solace the Soul, in the Embraces of eternal, infinite Love and Goodness. I have had a Conceit, which I submit to better Judgments; thus I expresst it, Christ comes in Flaming Fire, 2 *Thes.* 1. 7, 8. *Psal.* 50. 3. which shall consume the Material Heavens, as well as the Elements and Earth, 2 *Pet.* 3. 7, 10, 12, and is designed for *Vengeance to those that know not God, and obey not the Gospel*; 2 *Thes.* 1. 8. *and Perdition to ungodly Men*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 7. Now his Saints, *Jude* 14. *Zech.* 14 5. as well as Mighty Angels, 2 *Thes.* 1. 7. shall come with him, which I understand of Glorified Souls, to meet and be rejoyned to their raised Spiritual Bodies. Upon these Bodies that Fire shall have no Power; to them it shall be no Torture and Cruciation, it shall only be refreshing Light to them, tormenting Fire to the Wicked. The Bodies of both shall be raised Incorruptible, 1 *Cor.* 15. 52, 53. The Fire shall torment, but not corrupt and consume the Bodies of the Damned in Hell it self. God, Christ and the Saints dwell for ever in Light unapproachable, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. *Col.* 1. 12. and the Light wherein Christ appeared to *Paul*, was greater, more glorious than that of the Sun at Noon-day, *Acts* 26. 13. else could it not outshine it. This singularly Intense Light of Heaven is questionless, an unconceivable, even sensitive

sensitive Pleasure to the Saints refined Bodies. Now this is my fancy, since Light is dilute Fire, the Sun its Fountain a vivid Flame; yet everlasting Light in its highest Perfection, is one of the Pleasures and Delights of Heaven, being the Royal Robe of the Divine Majesty, *Psal.* 104. 2. And his Angels are a flaming Fire, therefore called *Seraphims*, from their Fiery Splendor and Glory, *Psal.* 104. 4. *Heb.* 1. 7. *Isa.* 6. 2, 6. yet Ministers to our good, even in that form *Isa.* 6. 6. *Heb.* 4. 14. Hence may it not be inferr'd that the flaming Fire in which Christ appears, will be so far from being hurtful, painful to his, and their glorified Bodies, as to be an object of special Sensitive Delectation, and cause a pleasurable refreshment wonderfully grateful, to those Celestial Natures, which shall dwell for ever in, and be cloathed with the Eternal Light of Heaven: That if it were possible for a glorified Saint to be hurried into the material Fire of Hell, 'twould not be hurt; or for a Damned Wretch to be led through Heaven, the Light thereof to him would be tormenting Fire: But this I leave in *Medio* as a Speculation perhaps too curious. I question not but that the Almightiness of God, which is engaged to promote to the utmost, the happiness of the Saints, can make those things, that now to the Body are most painful, to be then most pleasureful; that even in its Physical Constitution, as well as Moral, it shall be delighted with that which is distastful in this Life, if it be not sinful. And possibly *Adam*'s Body in its Primitive Innocent Estate of Creation, might be of the same Constitution, invulnerable, incombustible, *&c.* as far as was requisite to his security from Death: For I cannot so much as implicitly impute such Collusion to the

Divine Majesty, as to imagine that he only threat, nod *that*, as a Punishment of his Sin, which was the condition and necessity of his Nature. Neither will I deny that the Tree of Life was a Sacrament of Immortality: But conceive that, nor he, nor it could be ubiquitary or inseparable; nor do I think that the Deity obliged himself to a Providence respecting innocent Mankind, which would have been a perpetual series of Miracles, since 'twas as easie with God to make Impassibility an amissible Condition of this Nature, as Immortality: But I am not Determinate here neither.

However the Elevated Sense of that Immortal State above, will be abundantly pleasured with Super-natural and Super-sensual Gratifications, in the Jucundity, Profitableness and Honour of Heaven; the vain and empty Shadows whereof, engage it in endless Pursuits, during this its Degenerate state on Earth. The Generosity and Nobleness thereof will be so Transcendent, that it cannot but entertain with Indignation, Scorn, and Horror; all imaginable Solicitations to any thing sinfully Delightful, Commodious and vain Glorious: Every thing to it being as it self, Sublimated into a Spiritual and Celestial Nature, that it enjoys the sweet of all without the sowr, in an unfading Quintessence of most exquisitely delicious Contentments: where although there can never be any troubled Thoughts, yet may we ever sing, *Thy Comforts, Oh Lord, delight my Soul.*

Then, Oh my Soul, delight thou thy self in, and with them alone; and not meerly as in the Streams, but in the Well-spring it self. Own God in every inferiour means, but rest no where except in God Oh do not in a pompous Dress of Shadowy delusory Satisfactions, cheat thy self into

into ſubſtantial Miſeries. Secure to thy ſelf ſomething of a ſolid durable Nature, by making the Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, thy ſure and everlaſting Foundation; that being ſtrongly built upon the Rock, when the Rain deſcends, and the Floods come, and the Winds blow and beat upon thee, thy Comforts may not periſh with thee: And *Phil.* 4. 7. *The Peace of God which* [*tranſcends or*] *paſſes all* [*mind or*] *underſtanding, ſhall* [*watchfully guard or*] *keep* [*as with a Garriſon*, 2 Cor. 11. 32.] *thy heart, and* [*the devices, thoughts of thy*] *mind, through Chriſt Jeſus.* Muſt God be all in that Eternal Heaven, after which thou aſpireſt, and is there enough in him to ſatiate the moſt raiſed and ſublime Deſires of the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, and even the Angels, thoſe more Noble and Capacious Creatures: Nay is there an all-ſufficiency in him Commenſurate to his own infinite *Love*, in all the poſſibilities of its Perfection? And canſt not thou, Oh my Soul, fill thy ſelf to the brim, and meaſure out a Satisfaction more than adæquate to thy Rational Appetite, in that unmeaſurable fulneſs which comprehends the eminency and glory of all things. If Infiniteneſs cannot overfill thee a poor Worm, a little Atome of that which in compariſon of him is leſs than nothing, *Iſa.* 40. 17. then mayſt thou with ſome Shadow of reaſon attempt, to eek out thy content, with the Accumulation of other things. But ſince there is in God all that good Vertually, Unitedly and Tranſcendently (as in a commou Store-Houſe and Treaſury, and that without the rebatement and allay of any the leaſt commixtures of Evil, Vanity, or Imperfection, which ſtain the Glory of all thoſe diſperſed Excellencies in the

φρονήσου νοήματα.

Creation) that thy most unboundable desires, in all their conceivable Varieties, can court or make Suit unto; and whatever thy longings reach out after, thou mayest enjoy it, cheaper and better in God than any where; and since beside all this, there is an unfathomable *Surplusage* of proper Excellency and Glory in that [πολυ πέλαγος τȣ̃ καλȣ̃, as *Maximus Tyrius* calls the Deity] *Immense Ocean of all Goodness*, which has been, is, and will be his own and the whole Superiour Worlds Everlasting Contentation: And since he declares his ready willingness to communicate and impart of all this unto thee; not only what thine own Rational Consideration, but even what his own unmatchable *Love and Graciousness* can make thee willing to receive, thou canst not but be altogether inexcusable, if thou goest about to patch up an evanid and delusory Felicity to thy self, out of those cast-away Shreds and Rags of the inferiour Creation, which are not sufficient for themselves, but will be fatally disappointing to thee, and frustrate thy most Solicitous Expectations, whilst in the mean time thou sottishly and frantickly defraudest thy self of that plenary Satisfaction and Joy, which is tendered to thee by, and in God, both on Earth to raise and quicken thy devout and active Suspirations, and in the Heaven of Heavens to terminate, and perfect them in an Everlasting *Fruition*.

Here then only, Oh my Soul, build thy Tabernacle; Is it not good to be here? Where thy Faith it self shall be converted into Sense, Sight and Taste, in a never ending Possession, of what Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath entred into the Heart of Man to conceive. Thou art allowed to eye and enjoy God in the Creature, obliged to make all sensitive Contents, which thou

mayest

mayest lawfully or sinlessly receive from the Creature, as so many steps to mount upon, and ascend towards the Spiritual Contents of *Heaven*; necessitated to use every good thing below, as a *Remembrancer* to thee of its Perfection in God, that it may blow up thy passionate Aspirations, into a more vehement and inextinguishable Flame and Ardour toward him. In all things thou mayst taste that the Lord is *Gracious*, and enjoy sweet and comfortable Prelibations of Heaven. This is thy privilege: But on the other hand thou art prohibited to make a God of this World, and Sacrifice the Creature to thy Sense or Sensuality. To be happy in Exteriour Things relatively to God, making a Deference to him, whenever that which he hath shed abroad of his Goodness upon them, meets with thine Appetite in any agreeable Harmony, is a part of Happiness indulged to Mortality; but to hunt after Sensitive Pleasure for pleasures sake, and Profits for profits sake, and Honours for honours sake; taking up an absolute Rest in them, as if the ultimate end of Life, and advancing them to a Competition with, if not Preference before all-sufficient Goodness, this is the greatest Debauchery of Humane Nature, a step of Degeneracy below the *Diabolical*. For, though the Temperament of this, admit of some hot and dry, fiery and aery Sins; as *Pride*, *Revenge*, *Malice*, &c. yet does it not of all the Four Elements of Sensuality, *Fiery Lust*, *Aery Ambition*, *Watery Drunkenness*, *and Earthy Covetousness*, against which, Oh my Soul, it concerns thee to Fortifie and Arm thy self, with the contrary Elements of *Godliness*, viz. *Watery Repentance*, *Earthy Humility*, *Fiery Zeal* and *Love*, *Aery* or *Æthereal Hope*, and *Heavenly Mindedness*, and that which as the

*Heavens* is the *Magistery* and *Quintessence* of all *Faith Unfeigned.* This is the Grace which will carry thee aloft, above all restless Visibles, and possess thee of an Everlasting Sabbatisme, and Rest in the Invisible God, through the ever Blessed Jesus.

Oh therefore, take heed of changing the *Truth of God into a Lye, worshipping and serving the Creature more than the Creator, who is Blessed for ever Amen,* Rom. 1. 25. Let thy sweetest Enjoyments be so far from creating an Acquiescence, and Cessation of those ever active Desires, which nothing but Infiniteness can satiate, as to envigorate and heighten their Motions toward that Supreme and Soveraign Goodness; where as in a Center (yet Uncircumscribed, Unlimited) all the Rays of inferiour Excellency meet, all the unquiet Pulsations and Palpitations of troubled Hearts, are terminated in a perpetual and inviolable Stability and Rest. Cease from the Creature, Man, thy self, and be fill'd with God. The Divine Majesty cannot with patience endure to be cast in the Balance with Vanity; 'tis a high affront and disparagement. And, what is it, that in thy Appetite doth so oft Counter-balance the Felicity to be enjoy'd in him? *Behold* and *Judge:* The whole Earth is but as an invisible indivisible Point to the Heavens; What is it then to God? And what a point of this Point do the most Potent scramble for? And how unspeakably less still is the utmost possibility of thy *Quantum*? But then again, how large may thine Empire be in thine own mind, if God be Soveraign there? How unbounded thy Lot in the *Jerusalem* that is above? How Unfathomable, Incomprehensible, Unlimitable, Inestimable, Incomparable thy Portion in God? If thy under-

valuing

valuing it, and over-valuing that which deſerves not to be nam'd the ſame Day, Age, Eternity with it, do not forfeit it. Here thy mind ſhall be, not only Illaminated, but Inveſted, Cloathed with the Sun of ſubſtantial Wiſdom and Truth; thy Will and Appetite dwell in the very affluence and fulneſs of unboundable and everlaſting *Love*, *Goodneſs*, and *Righteouſneſs*; thy Heart even overwhelmed with a perpetual Torrent, and Inundation of Proſperity, Peace and Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory, in the Fountain of all Perfection the *One only God*, in *Three Perſons*, *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt*; to whom be Majeſty, Dominion, Adoration, Bleſſing and Praiſe in the *Church*, and thee, Oh my Soul, throughout all Ages, World without end, *Amen*.

*Thus far the Character.*

---

## CHAP. XI.

### *The Nature and Quality of the Pſalmiſt's Thoughts.*

2. I Have obliged my ſelf next to give ſome account of the Thoughts, the excellent Penman of this Pſalm thus decyphered, was cumbred with, under which he could find no redreſs on this ſide Heaven. In this Inquiry we ſhall gain little aſſiſtance from the proper ſignification of the Original Word. It is but by gueſs that Interpreters render it *Thoughts*, no neceſſity from either the Word it ſelf, or the ſcope of the two places where 'tis uſed, [here, and *Pſal.* 139. 23.] does determine it for Thoughts properly ſo call'd, any more than other Actings of the Soul. Of the Inclinations of the Affections, of the Will, it may be underſtood as well as the Mind and its Moti-

ous. Any thing proceeding from any of the Faculties and Powers of the Soul, that resembles the Branchings of a Tree, whether it appertain to the Head or Heart, or both, may be included in the sense of it. Therefore we must not exclude any thing within, deny no workings either of Understanding, or Appetite, or Conscience, to appertain to the meaning of the Word.

But since the Translation confines us to *Thoughts*, and the Original inforces no sense but what relates to the Physical quality of such like operations of the Mind in general, which resemble the Ramifications or spreading dividing Branches of a Tree; whereas 'tis their moral Nature we are chiefly concern'd about in this disquisition; hence are we again put upon a search into the Context, and Scope of the Psalm, and the Psalmist's present case, that we may obtain a more clear and distinct *Idæa* of them. Now I take it for granted, that in some part or other of the Psalm, these Thoughts are expresst in Words, or at least plainly imply'd and hinted. Therefore shall I survey it as impartially as may be, to find them out and not clog my Discourse with Impertinencies.

1. In *General*, The Thoughts were such as in their Nature did enforce a necessity of Comfort, and that from God himself, as the Text evinces. There seem to be insinuated a contrariety betwixt his Thoughts and Comforts; that the latter were absolutely needful to antidote the former. Had they been good and delightful cogitations, they would have carried a spring of Satisfaction in their own Bowels. Had they been sinfully evil, he would not have said, *IN the multitude*, &c. which supposes a continuance of the Thoughts, even whilst the Comforts were apply'd as a remedy

medy to remove the Malignity of them. But ſinful Thoughts are not to be oppos'd with Comforts, that will permit them to continue; but with Contrition, Repentance, Grace, Converſion, Holy Thoughts, which will immediately eject and diſcontinue them. Yet may I admit that the Thoughts might be ſuch as were occaſion'd by Sin; Sin might be the object of ſome of them, the cauſe of others, yet the form of none.

They were without all peradventure Uncomfortable, Undelightful, Unpleaſing Thoughts; therefore does he derive his Comforts from another Sourſe and Spring. His Thoughts though a broad ſpreading Tree with multitudes of Branches, yet did not bear a dram of this Fruit. No he never looks for it there, but ſteps into *Paradiſe*, and takes it from the *Tree of Life. Thy Comforts.* We therefore will ſuppoſe, that they were not ſuch as did corrupt his Mind, but diſquiet it; ſinleſs they were, but ſaddening; they induced no guilt, but only Grief; they did not avert his Mind from God and Goodneſs, but only from Peace and Reſt; ſinking it into Diſconſolateneſs, till he took Sanctuary in the Refreſhments of Heaven. The Text plainly intimates that if he had not found ſome effectual help in theſe, his Thoughts would have been an overmatch for him, and have born him down. Therefore *Afflicting they were but not Defiling.* This was their General Nature.

2. *Particularly*, They were of the nature of Meditations, *i. e. Heart-affecting Thoughts.* Not mere Speculations, or notional Thoughts that were confin'd within the boundaries of his Mind, and Underſtanding; but Thoughts that ſunk downwards, and produc'd ſome effects on his Soul.

Soul. For since no Thoughts are afflicting to us, but only as they work upon those Passions of our Minds, which are of a turbulent tormenting Nature; hence it appears that these had an influence upon his *Irascible Affections*, (as by a *Synecdoche* they are call'd) representing to them some Evils from which they could not but retire in an hostile aversation. For no Evils without us cruciate us, till they thus get within us, and fight us by our own Passions. This is the *Beelzebub* that possesses us, and creates a Hell in our Minds, even our masterly imperious Appetite. The Thoughts that create a tumult here, are as so many Fiends to torture us. That rebel rage which they infuse into our Blood and Spirits, disorders, discomposes our whole Man, and makes us Devils to our selves. Thoughts then they were exciting Passions. Therefore we must search and consider what Passions in particular were in a civil war within the *Psalmist*, and also the quality of those Evils which excited them. And that I may not be necessitated to repeat things over and over, as the more natural Synthetical way and method of enquiry (first after the Objects here particularly set down, thence concluding the general Acts which only are implyed) would compel me: I shall chuse the *Analytical* rather, proposing first the General Passions, conversant about the numerous special Objects, which shall respectively be referr'd to their general and proper Heads, together with such as are of Affinity therewith, though not expreſt in the *Psalm.*

The Thoughts then were of three kinds, answerable to three Affections, which were vehemently moved by them, *viz. Fear, Grief, Dispair.* Any one of these alone is torturous, but altogether

altogether intolerable. Grief pains our Hearts as an oppressing load, wasts and washes away those Spirits that should support us, weakens and effeminates our Minds into an insufficency or unwillingness to regard any thing, but what will contribute to its own excesses, till as an impetuous Torrent or Deluge it overwhelm our Soul and Spirit, and sometimes destroy the Body also; and herein it is more anguishful than Fear, because the Evil present and felt stings more cruelly, than when only foreseen in its Causes; the Sense presenting many things to torment us, which before our Fears were not privy to; even as Fear sometimes represents Evils more terrible than they are in reality found to be. But now if to the present troublesome Experience, be adjoined a dreadful expectation of worse to come, or more of the same kind, this will double the torture, because it doubles the perturbation, and further betrays the succours which Reason or Hope might administer to us. But if to both these be superadded an absolute hopelessness of relief that we see, and foresee, and feel our selves miserable, without any likelyhood of Redemption, that either our Reason is darken'd by the suffusion of our Passions, so as not to be able to gain a prospect of remedy, or the magnitude of the Evil it self is altogether invincible; this strangles Nature, and makes it sink under its despondencies, into a Hell upon Earth. Of these Fear is the first and lightest, and many times comes single. For whilst an evil is at a distance there's a possibility to prevent its actual incursion. But Grief does often succeed the torment of Fear, as when the evil does not surprize, but gradually invade us, and this is like a new Wound in an old Sore, therefore does more

more ſmartingly gall us. Yet both theſe together are nothing to Deſpair, which is a compound of the other two, beſides what it brings of its own to make a Man inexplicably, unſupportably miſerable.

1. *Fearing Thoughts*, terrifing Imaginations are bloody Tormenters, 1 *Joh.* 4. 18. and tear the Soul in pieces. When an Evil is imminent and we are conſcious of an inability to avoid or reſiſt it, our Spirits ſuccumb, ſink, and in a pale horrour retire, and run away from the approaching danger. For ſome kind of danger is commonly the object of Fear, which is excited when the Mind apprehends, and the Thoughts dwell upon the greatneſs, nearneſs, or unavoidableneſs of the Peril. The danger in the *Pſalmiſt*'s Thoughts ſeems to be double, *viz.* of two the greateſt evils *Sin* and *Death*.

1. Of Sin: for of that (under Correction) I interpret, *ver.* 18. *When I ſaid my foot ſlippeth, &c.* The Expreſſion is but thrice beſide, that I find in the *Pſalms*, and in two of them 'tis evident that a moral ſlipping or ſliding into Sin is meant, and the context gives fair probability for the third alſo, *Pſal.* 17. 5. *Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footſteps ſlip not*, that is, *that I ſin not*, Pſal. 38. 16, 17, 18. *When my foot ſlippeth they magnifie themſelves againſt me, For I am ready to halt, and my Sorrow is continually before me, For I will declare my Iniquity, I will be ſorry for my Sin.* Theſe 3 Verſes are connected cauſally; I know not how to make ſence of them, if the ſlipping and halting be other than the ſinning he ſorrowed for. I take Sorrow in the latter clauſe of the 17. *ver.* not formally, for the Paſſion of Sorrow, but materially and objectively for the thing he ſorrowed for, *viz.* his Sin,

Sin; and so account this an equivalent Expression with that *Psal.* 51. 3. *My Sin is ever before me:* And this is not an unusual thing in Scripture for Affections or Actions to be put for their Objects or Effects, as in that very *Psalm ver.* 3. *There is no soundness in my Flesh because of thine Anger*, i. e. the effects of thine Anger: And *ver.* 9. *Lord all my desire is before thee*, i. e. the objects of my desire, the things I desire. However the Sorrow there was for *Sin, ver.* 18. and so the Sin was before him, immediately in the Sorrow. I account that the Clauses of those two Verses answer one another thus, *I am ready to halt, for I will declare my Sin*, — I'll not deny the Truth though it give advantage to my Adversaries, and occasion their magnifying themselves against me. I find my self oft liable to fall into Sin, I acknowledge it, let them make the best and worst they can of it, and triumph as they please. *Only do not thou forsake me*, ver. 21. *Hear me*, ver. 15, 16. *so as to uphold my goings, that though I fall I may not be utterly cast down*, Psal. 37. 24. The third place is a perfect parallel to this here, *ver.* 18. and so also in many things is the whole *Psalm.* 'Tis *Psalm* 73. 2. *But as for me, my Feet were almost gone, my Steps had well-nigh slipt: For I was envious at the Foolish*, &c. This seems a plain indication, both of the nature of the slip that 'twas moral, a slip into Sin, and also of the kind of the Sin, into which he was ready to slip, or did slip, either *Envy* or some effect thereof. To Interpret it of slipping into Suffering appears very incongruous, the whole scope repudiates it. For suppose he thought himself in danger of Death, as we shall see our *Psalmist* was, and intended in this *Metaphor* to declare it thus, *I had almost slipt into Destruction. For*

I

*I was envious*, &c. This ſounds harſhly to rational Ears; the reaſon of the coherence muſt be far fetch'd, and ſuppoſe our ſenſe ere the illation will hold, as thus, *That Envy is a Sin, and Sin expoſes to Deſtruction*; but this plainly ſuppoſes that the firſt ſlip muſt be into Sin, as we Interpret. Why then go we about the Buſh? The Original Word where it is not tranſlated ſlip, doth oft ſubmit to a ſence, through the force of the matter 'tis apply'd to, which imports ſome thing of Sin, as *Pſal.* 82. 5. *All the Foundations of the Earth* [ יִמּוֹטוּ ] *are out of courſe*; Nod, ſlip, are moved out of their due moral courſe of Righteouſneſs in which they ought to move. *Pſ.* 55. 3. [ יָטּוּ ] *They ſlip, move, caſt Iniquity upon me*, that is, they lay it to my charge, which without Iniquity they could not do to the Innocent.

I confeſs there's nothing in the Context to enforce this moral ſence, ſo neither is there any thing to urge the other. It lies indifferent to both. Therefore 'tis but rational to apply that ſence to it, which other places neceſſitate. For why muſt a new ſence be impos'd upon an old Phraſe here only, when there's nothing to conſtrain it? Let it therefore imply 'tis fear of falling into Sin, his ſence of a Temptation to it, as *Pſal.* 73. 2. That very Sin there inſinuated, ſeems to be in the *Pſalmiſt's* Eye. Help failed him on Earth, *ver.* 16, 17. Iniquity was triumphant, *ver.* 20, 21. and Innocency trampled on; this touch'd him to the Quick, and was the ground of his Plea, *ver.* 20. He therefore ſeems to be inclin'd to envy that Proſperity, wherein they flouriſh'd, whilſt himſelf was in a condition full of trouble, fear and hazzard; and yet being aware of the Temptation, he flies to God, *Oh! my Foot ſlips,*

*I am like to be born down with the violence of the suggestion, help Lord, and sustain me, that I may not sin against thee and my own Soul.* The Temptation had insinuated it self into his Thoughts, but had not obtain'd the consent of his Will, that rises against it, and calls in the aid of Heaven, and God is merciful to him so as to relieve him.

To this Head therefore may I refer all the disconsolate Thoughts, that arise in the Hearts of God's Servants through the suggestions of *Satan*. Whether ordinary Temptations, or those extraordinary sudden Injections, which strike a dread and horrour into the Mind, and are so far from ravishing its consent, that it rises in Indignation, Enmity, and Abhorrence against them, and would give Worlds to be freed from them. As *Atheistical*, *Blasphemous*, *Execratory*, *&c.* thoughts of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, Providence, *&c.* These though in the matter of them, they be more abundantly enormous than common Temptations, yet have proportionably a greater check from the Will, which in a more violent Antipathy sets it self against them, and therefore, though they be more our Trouble, are less our Sin, than such as with more freedom are entertain'd into our Minds. For if it were a sin to have evil suggested outwardly, or from a Devil without us in the gross way of Temptation; whilst our Hearts abominate it, the sinless Lamb of God would not have been free; so neither when invisibly and inwardly; since even external Proposals cannot be understood and known, without inward Thoughts; and 'tis all one whether the Thoughts be excited mediately from something without, or more immediately from something within; whether the Tempter raise the Storm

by

by a Witch, or his one immediate Empire over the Clouds, Vapours, Exhalations and Winds, whether he bring it in at the Cinque-ports of Senſe external, or impreſs it upon the internal working upon the Fancy and Invention, with the aid of Memory. For that by Gods Permiſſion he can move matter, is unqueſtionable, therefore congeſt our animal Spirits into ſuch Forms and Repreſentations by an immediate impulſe, as they are apt to receive from the Objects of outward Senſe, which he has the advantage of doing more effectually, upon inſpection of our natural Temper and Complexion, and therefore Inclination, that cannot be concealed and hid from his inſinuating intellect, and critical Obſervation. Whence Melancholick Conſtitutions are moſt haunted with theſe black Spirits, and Temptations.

Hither alſo is to be reduc'd *Horror of Conſcience*, either antecedent or ſubſequent to ſinful Practices or the Temptations to them; the former whereof is ſo commendable in all, the latter confounding. For if Conſcience ſtartle and be ſtruck with Amazement and Aſtoniſhment, upon the temptation to ſome horrid Crimes, (as it will ſometimes, even in the profligately Wicked, which is an evidence that they are not wholly given up by God) it may be ſtill capable of being touch'd with leſſer, with all, which may iſſue in true Converſion, through the Grace, Concurrence, and Bleſſing of Almighty God; or in further degrees of tenderneſs and reluctance to Sin, in thoſe that are already Converted, as a fruit of that gracious Promiſe of taking away the Heart of Stone, *and giving an Heart of Fleſh*, Ezek. 11. 19. and 36. 26. The *Pſalmiſt*'s here, was a dread of this Nature, and although this *Pſalm* give us no intimation of

any

any horror in his mind at present, consequent to evil Actions; yet part of the scope of the *Psalm* is to excite it in others, whose Crimes he lays open, and aggravates as they deserve. The Conscience of his own Innocency now, did antidote such troubles in himself, but his impleading his Enemies for the fouleſt Injustice and Babarousness, has a tendency to rouze their sleepy Consciences, into such an awakening sense and feeling as might make them Terrors to themselves; as himself was afterwards, upon his two foul Commissions, *Psal.* 51.

Neither are those fears and dreads of *Satan*, and Spiritual Enemies, which sometimes rack and cruciate the Minds of Men, altogether to be forgotten. He that is amazed at, and implores Divine Mercy against the Temptation, cannot easily be reconciled to the Tempter, in whom, with his Angels there is a combination of every thing that can render Adversaries formidable. What numerous Legions in which not one single Enemy, but is brim full of rancor and rage against us, indow'd with a world of crafty Politicks, and inventive cunning, to devise whatever that unfathomable depth of Malice and Emity, can direct against us, to ruin us everlastingly; together with an unknown and unimaginably great sufficiency of Power and Activity to execute what they contrive, and they have no limits of their duration on this side Eternity. Oh dreadful Host indeed, what may they despair to effect, upon impotent and degenerate sinful Man. But the dependance of things one upon another, I see, has made me forget my Scope, which was to remember the Fears of Sin, and Temptation to it, rather than the Tempter. I proceed to the

2. *Danger* wherein the *Psalmist* did apprehend himself, *viz.* of *Death*, not so much Natural as Violent. His Enemies design'd to Murther him by a pretended Law, notwithstanding his Righteousness and Innocency; and for that end had sentenced and condemned him, *ver.* 21. 22. Whence he declares, *ver.* 17. *Unless the Lord had been my help, my Soul had almost, or quickly, dwelt in silence.* [*My Soul*] that is I my self, the better part by a Figure being put for the Person, or rather for the worse part, the Body, [*dwelt in silence*] *i. e.* the Grave, as is unanimously agreed by Interpreters, according to *Psal.* 115. 17. *The Dead praise not the Lord, nor any that go down into silence.* Which is not to be understood of the Soul, but Body only. *Psal.* 49. 12, 20. *Nevertheless* [or *And*] *Man being in Honour abideth not a Night, he is like the Beasts that* [דמו] *are silent*, i. e. *Dead. Psal.* 31. 17. fully.

φοβερῶν φοβερώτατον. Arist.

Death indeed is the King of Terrors, *Job* 18. 14. Of all Terribles the most terrible to Nature, because it dissolves its most amicable Bands, and utterly extinguishes all those hopes, which it has for many years been kindling; and were it not for the reliefs of Grace, it would certainly fill Men with unspeakable Agonies, could they view it in all its antecedent and consequent Pomp and Circumstances. For 'tis only ignorance of this very solemn change, that causes the most so fool-hardily and without concern, to entertain the thoughts and approaches of it. But a violent Death, when a Man lies at the mercy of those whose tender Mercies are Cruelty, must needs cause more bitter Reflections than where Nature gently expires under the com-

*God's Effections are always better, milder, than his Permissions.*

compaſſionate tender Hands of the God of Nature, who always contends in meaſure, that the Spirit may not fail, and the Soul which he hath made.

To this Head then appertains the trouble ariſing from Fears of Suffering and Affliction, of what kind ſoever. In particular thoſe that accompany and follow Death, eſpecially the Terrors of Judgment and Hell, which is Eternal Death. This the *Pſalmiſt* ſometimes felt the ſting and torture of, as a preventive Medicine that he might not feel it everlaſtingly. *Pſal.* 116. 3. *The pains of Hell gat hold upon me*, call'd the *Cords of Hell*, *Pſal.* 18. 5. *marg.* חֶבְלֵי (whence perhaps our Engliſh Word *Cable*) it ſometimes ſignifies Corruption, Deſtruction, *Mic.* 2. 10. Troops, Bands, Companies, *Pſal.* 119. 61. either of theſe may ſuit well enough. But above all Fear of God's Anger, and juſt Diſpleaſure, moſt heavily ſits upon the Spirit of a Gracious Man. All the Troops of Hell, and Triumphs of Cruelty, are but *Mormo's* in compariſon. Finite Fury cannot plague infinitely; therefore our Saviour adviſes, *Luke* 12. 4, 5. *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do; But I will forwarn you whom you ſhall fear: Fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into Hell, yea I ſay unto you fear him.* Filial Fear of God indeed brings no trouble, but joy. 'Tis only a Fear working to Bondage, oppreſſive to Nature, a Rebel againſt Reaſon, ſtupifying the Spirits, enervating the Will, damping the Affections, over-throwing our Reſolution, defeating our Counſels, confounding our Conſciences, betraying us into a baſe and unworthy ſervitude to our own corrupt Imaginations, Errors, and Ignorance,

rance, and every exteriour Agent that has the power or will to abuſe them, and our Credulity to our Prejudice and Perdition.

2. *Grieving Thoughts* and *Impreſſions.* The Evils did not lie perdue at a diſtance, but in a cloſe encounter charg'd home, and wounded his Heart, that it bleeds here in godly Sorrow. Indeed whatever cauſes Fear and Deſpair, does alſo introduce Grief, when it becomes preſent; but his Mind was overwhelmed with ſuch Reflections, as had a peculiar influence upon his Sorrow, beſide thoſe that did produce Fear and Deſpair.

As, 1. The Sins of others. The foul Enormities of Wicked Men, whereof ſeveral are named.

1. *Pride*, Ver. 2. *Render a Reward to the Proud; a Reward in Vengeance.* In this Sin the Devil began the Dance, and all his Servants wear his Livery, and tread in his Steps. For this their Loftineſs and triumphing Arrogance, his Heart groan'd out the double, *How long? ver.* 3. Words of Lamentation. Indeed when men are deſpis'd they are either anger'd or griev'd, anger'd if Proud, griev'd if Lowly, incens'd if Paſſionate, if Meek troubled. 'Tis the property of Pride to deſpiſe and ſlight all, but bear ſlighting from none.

2. *Boaſting.* The inward filth of Pride and Arrogance foaming out at the Mouth, *ver.* 4. *All the workers of Iniquity* [peak boaſt] *themſelves*; the coherence ſeems to intimate, that the things they boaſted of were their own height and power to oppreſs the Innocent. Being got to the top of the Mount of Honour, and Worldly Proſperity, which puft them up they imagin'd it for their Security, and Glory, to fall down upon, and cruſh, and break in pieces *God's Heritage*, and this

this they gloried in as becoming their Grandeur Potency. Now to be not only trod and trampled upon, with the foot of Pride, and spurn'd, kick'd away like a Dog, but also hear the Proud-doers brag of it, as a brave and worthy Fact, as it heightens the Sin of the Actors, so the Sorrow of the Sufferers; both as an addition to their own Affliction, and also a further aggravation of the Sin. 'Tis easier to bear a scorn in deeds, when a Man has the liberty to suppose that possibly it may not be the issue of design, and a malicious Mind, or that the Agent may after grieve for and repent of it; than to bear their blessing themselves in it, praising themselves for it, which is a testimony of their love to it, delight in it. But if the Word [יִתְאַשְּׁרוּ] be taken in a softer sence [*Do will*] or do speak of, or speak themselves, *prædicabunt se, Interlin: i. e.* will vaunt, praise or extol themselves, in Words magnifie themselves, both think and speak highly of themselves, and by consequence, basely, scornfully, slightingly, of those that are not like themselves in Wickedness; and therefore of those qualities that difference both Parties, speak well of Wickedness, that denominates and delights them, but ill of Godliness which they oppose; yet both perhaps under the disguise of other Names, plausible for their one Wickedness, disgraceful for Holyness, as the manner and guise of the World alway has been, and will be; this has not a little of guilt and grief in it. Sin is asham'd of its own

*The future for the present tense, a common Enallage except the* עַד־מָתַי *be repeated here again, out of the foregoing Verse, as our Translaters think it must: But then why not also in the Fifth and Sixth Verses, where the Verbs are all future, yet rendred in the present.*

Name, and therefore fights againſt Goodneſs under borrowed Colours, transferring its own title to that which it oppoſes; and it cannot but be grief to an Innocent to ſuffer under the notion of a Malefactor, to have his Name murdered as well as his Perſon; whilſt his Adverſaries add Ignominy to Cruelty; but eſpecially it afflicts his Soul, that God and Religion and Holineſs ſuffer, in the repute of the ignorant, and ſequacious Multitude, which is led in its judgment of things by the Hand rather than Head; by the power and opinion of its Maſters, without making any diſquiſition or inſpection into the reality of matters; taking all upon truſt whether it be true or falſe, good or evil. A Beaſt that with a ſtrong Bridle, and ſharp Spurs will ride freely Blindfold poſt haſt into Hell, but is infinitely malapert and reſtive in the courſe toward Heaven; its Eyes, like thoſe of a Fly, conſiſting of infinite little dim Atoms, without a due proportion of Brains of their own to govern them, and therefore are as wild and wanton in their motions.

To this may I join the trouble which the *Pſalmiſt* ſeem'd to be affected with, through other perverſe ſpeeches of thoſe wicked Perſons, which though not ſo expreſly, yet may implicitly ſeem to relate to Pride; becauſe interpos'd between the mention thereof and the effect of it, in Boaſting, *ver.* 4. *How long* יַבִּיעוּ *ſhall they pour out as a Fountain does Water*, and ſpeak עָתָק: which properly ſignifies things hardned with age, yet upon the point to be remov'd, and paſs away; as may be gathered from the uſe and ſignification of its root. *Theſe hard things they ſpoke*, I take to refer unto others chiefly, as what follows did to themſelves. 1. Hard things, in *Enoch*'s Prophe-

cy,

cy, recited *Jude* 15. were spoken against God. May not our *Psalmist* refer to that Prophecy, which no doubt came to his knowledge, either by Tradition or the Prophetick Spirit: If so, then may they possibly be those recited *ver.* 7. or such like false Atheistical, Blasphemous against God, his Providence, VVord, VVays, People. 2. Hard things, *Psal.* 31. 18. were spoke against the Righteous, proudly and contemptuously in Reproach, *ver.* 11. and Slaunder, 13. whence his Eye was consumed, *and his life spent with grief, ver.* 9, 10.

To this Head then may we reduce all those troubles which arise from the Persecution of the Tongue. Threatnings, Aspersings, Defamations, Detractions, Censurings, uncharitable rash Judgings, Mockings and Deridings, and cloathing Goodness and good Men with Reproaches, branding them with odious Names, contrary to their real Nature, speaking all manner of Evil, *Matth.* 5. 11.

3. *Persecution*, which here was bloody and barbarously cruel, *ver.* 5, 6. *They break in pieces thy People, O Lord, and afflict thine Heritage; they slay the Widow and the Stranger, and murther the Fatherless.* Wherein both their Inhumanity and base Cowardice manifest themselves, in that they rage against the weak, impotent, and friendless, that have none to plead for, succour, relieve, and help them alive, or revenge them when dead. This is justly imputable to *Doeg* and *Saul.* The former by killing the Priests of the Lord, 1 *Sam.* 22. 18. did exceedingly afflict God's Heritage and People, and brake them in pieces and made many Fatherless and Widows, and afterward murdred them in a savage unparallell'd manner, *ver.* 19. and when

he had done boasted of it, *Psal.* 52. 1. as the Wicked here, if that was not the same fact. *Saul* also slew the *Gibeonites*, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1, 2, 5. call'd *Strangers*, 2 *Chron.* 2. 17. These may be here understood as well as *Proselytes*.

Here then *David* lost his Friends and Favourers by a violent Death, and hither may we refer the loss of Friends and Relations by a natural Death. A cause of Grief as just as common. But especially to this Head belongs the troubles for the Miseries and Calamities both of Church and State. When the Gates of *Sion* mourn, we are but ill Members thereof, if it create not some kind of Sympathy in our Hearts.

4. *Atheism, disbelief of God's Omniscience and Providence.* Ver. 7. *Yet they say the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.* This was indeed the spring of all their other Sins, and therefore as *Asaph*, in another like case was affected with it, *Psal.* 73. 11. *They say how doth God know, and is there knowledge in the most High*, &c? So here is *David* very much concern'd about it, and so much the more because Divine Vengeance seem'd to be concern'd so little, *ver.* 1. whence he spends the 4 following Verses to evince and convince them of the infinite unlimitable Knowledge of God, whereas he contents himself with a bare mentioning their other Sins, without such reasoning against them.

And indeed any serious Heart that duly ponders its dependance for Life, Motion and Being upon God, will be tenderly sensible of all Affronts put upon him; will not with patience indure that he should fall under Disparagement. As a dutiful Child will hear untoucht the Reproaches cast upon a Stranger, or any other rather than its Father,

ther. He who can be content that God should go less than infinite in all Perfections, can be well pleas'd that he should not be God, and that the World be depriv'd and destitute of his Government and Providence, which would be the greatest mischief to it conceivable. Better infinitely, that the whole Universe should be hurry'd back again into its Primitive *Chaos* and Confusion, than God be lessen'd in any one of his Excellencies. If ungodly Souls disavow any Divine Attribute, and seek to rob God of the honour of that, without which a good Man cannot live, or live comfortably, 'tis a Dagger at the Heart, and wounds the very Soul, and so ought to do in all that are tender of the Glory of their *Creator*. For our own sakes we have reason to abhor *Atheism*, in every degree and form of it; because if there were not a God, or if he were not of infinite Understanding, we were of all Creatures most miserable; not only as depriv'd of our true Felicity, and the hopes of it, (for how should he reward us did he not know or regard us, and our Integrity?) but we should fatally be expos'd to all the vilest Indignities, and most deplorable Calamities, the Wit and Rage of Men and Devils could devise and inflict upon Earth; and since their and our Beings are altogether incorruptible, as far as Spiritual, we should in like manner be dog'd and pursu'd with their implacable Malice, in our separate and immortal State; and be desperate of succour and deliverance from that Eternal *Erynnis*, those innumerable Legions of ever torturing *Furies*, that would be let loose upon us, to lash and sting us, with the utmost of their virulent Indignation. For how should the Deity relieve us, if he know nothing of us. 'Tis therefore the highest Interest

of

of real goodneſs, that there is a God of *Unlimitable Intelligence* and *Love*, to ſuperviſe and care for us, that no Evils can be imagin'd againſt us, in the moſt dark and ſecret receſſes of Hell, much leſs on Earth, but are to him as viſible, as though Writ or Graven in the Roof of Heaven, by the Finger of God, in Letters formed all of Suns or Stars; and he is repleniſh'd with that Wiſdom and Graciouſneſs, which both knows how, is perfectly willing, and effectually engag'd to counteract them.

But as this and the other Three, ſo all the Sins of the Wicked are a bitter Grief to a good Soul. Whence *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 136. *Rivers of Tears run down mine eyes, becauſe they keep not thy Law.* Be their Sins only Omiſſions, which in the Eſtimate of the World are of a lighter Nature, though not in the account of God, and an Illuminated Conſcience; yet will they be grievous to thoſe that love the Lord and his Laws: And 'tis a good token of Integrity when the Sins of others are a burden. Self may engage a Man againſt his own Sins, but if the wickedneſs of thoſe we have no concern with, deeply affect our Hearts, 'tis an Evidence we are acted by the Intereſt of God.

Let this then, Oh my Soul, over-rule all thy Paſſions. Live under ſome ſenſe with God: What diſhonors him, let it humble thee. Be not ſo much troubled at the Miſchiefs, wherewith Men in the Triumphant Madneſs of their Proſperity, indeavour to plague thee, as at the Sin whereby they duel Heaven. Where thy Father ſuffers moſt in his Glory, do thou ſuffer with him. Thy Iraſcibles never act more commendably, than when they run upon the Errand of thy Maker. Thou art angry and ſinneſt not, when angry at Sin.

'Tis

'Tis hard not to Sin in Sorrow, if it be not Sorrow for Sin. And if thou groan under the Wickedness of others, sure thou wilt'st not, canst not, darst not be so much a Hypocrite, as to go light under the greater Load of thine own. Thou art conscious to thy self of many Circumstances, aggravating thine own, which thou hast no reason to apply to the Crimes of any beside. Where thou knowest of most Evil, and that is in thy self, there must thou spend *Oceans:* since the little in comparison, which thou knowest of other Mens faults, requires thy Rivers. Let thy Sorrows bear Proportion to thy Condition and Conscience. Weep, or at least mourn for, and bemoan others, but most thy self. There must thou pay thy Drops, here a Deluge.

To this place therefore appertains all Spiritual Trouble for Sin, and the want and weakness and defectiveness of Grace, with the effects thereof; That Anguish of Mind, which springs from the sense of Sin's odiousness to God: The Agonies and Anxieties of the *New Birth*, and under Relapses, whatever goes under the name of a Wounded Spirit or Troubled Conscience. But,

2. Not only the evil of Sin, but other Evils, in themselves or to him in effect, did sadden the Holy Psalmist's Soul. Two especially,

1. The Prosperity of the Wicked, their Joy; but his smart, Vers. 3. *How long shall the Wicked, Oh LORD, how long shall the wicked triumph?* A common Offence and Trouble, to both the Religious and Rational World. The Gracious Servants of God often bemoan it. What a Multitude of Precepts and Comforts doth the 37. *Psal.* present, as an Antidote against fretting about it? *Habakkuk* bewails it, *Hab.* 1. 2, 3, 4. *Jer.* Ch. 12. 1, 2,

Rea-

reaſons and pleads with God concerning it. In *Job*, How many Diſcourſes are there to this purpoſe? And every where in the *Pſalms*; to inſtance in one more only, *Pſal.* 73. Verſ. 3. *I was envious at the fooliſh, when I ſaw the Proſperity of the Wicked:* After a Deſcription whereof he adds, Verſ. 21. *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my Reins.* This alſo was a ſtumbling Block to the *Philoſophical* World, whereof the more Conſiderate and Vertuous made a good uſe, others a bad; reaſoning from the unequal Diſtribution of Temporal Things, againſt the *Being* of *God* and *Providence*; into ſuch Abſurdities may thoſe run, who having but dark Apprehenſions of Immortality, and the Eternal Recompences of a Future State; take their meaſures from ſenſe, and conſider not the Unproportionableneſs of this preſent moment of Temporal Life, to a vaſt Immenſe Eternity.

2. The Unproſperous, Afflicted, Perſecuted State of the People of God, did excite in him ſorrowful Reflections. I doubt not but that with a broken Heart he Writ down that Complaint, Verſ. 5. *They break in pieces thy People, O LORD, and afflict thine Heritage. They ſlay the Widow and the Stranger and murder the Fatherleſs.* Sure with a Soul melted into Sympathizing Commiſerations doth he remember this. So *Aſaph*, *Pſal.* 73. 10. *Therefore his People return hither, and Waters of a full Cup are wrung out to them.* 21. *Thus my Heart was grieved*, &c. which refers to all before Diſcours'd, concerning proſperous Wickedneſs, and ſuffering Godlineſs. And, How can the Body in many parts of it ſuffer, and the reſt have no Fellow-feeling? Thou art not vitally united as a Member to the Body of Chriſt, Oh my Soul, but may'ſt juſtly

justly dread that he will cut thee off, as a dead Limb, and bury thee in Hell, if thou be insensible of its Pains and Agonies. Shew that the common Soul and Spirit Animates thee, by a common sense with the rest of the Members, that Communicate in it with thee. If thou be not with them in Passion, yet be in Compassion. *Why Persecutest thou me?* Says Christ to *Saul*, *Acts* 9. 4. The pain is in the Members, the sense in the Head. Christ disclaims thee, thou art none of that [me] whereof he is so tender, if thou suffer'st not by Commiseration, when his Servants suffer Affliction. Put on thy Bowels, if thou desirest the Yernings of his, when thy Condition shall be like theirs. With the Prophet *Jerem.* 9. 1. Say *Oh that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night, for the slain of the Daughter of my People. My Bowels, my Bowels, I am pained at my very Heart, the Walls of my Heart make a noise in me, I cannot hold my Peace, because thou hast heard, Oh my Soul, the sound of the Trumpet, the alarm of War.*

To this Head may be reduced all those Troubles, which are Fruits of Publick Calamities to Church or State, *Persecutions*, *Martyrdoms*, *Massacres*, &c. Wars and Violence, Oppressions, Injuries, *&c.* whatever may be the Effects of the Rage and Fury of Men, and Malice of impure Malignant Spirits. These being the Permissions of Providence to punish Sin, which, as Executions of Justice, God attributes to his own Efficiency. *Amos* 3. 6. Though mediately, may we not also refer hither the immediate Effects of his Power and Justice, in *Plagues*, *Sicknesses*, *Famines*, &c. Since they agree, though not in the Instruments and Means, yet in the Original and Author, and Meritorious Cause, and Principal End. 3. *De-*

3. *Despairing* Thoughts and Reflections, are beyond all Imagination Afflictive; and of this Nature, we find some oppressing the *Psalmist's* Spirit, although they were not of the worst kind. For despair he did not of Mercy and Relief from Heaven, a Misery of all other most intolerable. He only despaired as being destitute of all Hope, of Help and Succour from Man. Verf. 16. *Who will rise up for me? Who will stand up for me?* The redoubled Interrogation implies a more vehement Negation. *None, none at all:* For, *unless the Lord had been my help*, I had gone without Redemption. Verf. 17. All the hopes I had upon Earth, did utterly fail, there was *none shut up or left.* I was reduc'd to the utmost extremity, and that was Gods opportunity. *He was seen in the Mount*, when the Knife was at the Throat, and defunct was all confidence in Man.

Now although the failure of all Earthly Supports be grievous, yet when a Man has encouragment to devolve himself on the never-failing Goodness of God, he is never destitute of a Satisfaction which will abundantly Counterveil those troublesome Disappointments; and therefore his Condition is not really miserable: But if this fail also, *if his strength and hope Perish from the Lord*, *Lam.* 3. 18. that he be in *Saul's* sore Distress, 1 *Sam.* 28. 6, 15. and can have a Prospect of nothing but Eternal *Death and Damnation*: Tongue cannot tell, nor Heart imagine the Anxieties, and Agonies, which as a Prolepsis and Anticipation of Hell, sting and excruciate his miserable Soul. There's nothing on this side that Dungeon of everlasting Darkness and Woe, can equal this; which made *Spira* sometimes wish himself in Hell, that he might feel the worst. Oh doleful

ful Perplexity indeed! when a Man out of a distracting fear of Hell desires to feel it. Oh Horror! when anguish of Mind under dreadful Expectations, enforces his will to chuse what is infinitely more anguishful; and the Drops of Brimstone and Fire that scald his Conscience, urge him to a strange unaccountable freeness, to be ever consuming in that *Bottomless Ocean*, where Mitigation of Torment, end of Misery, abatement of Sense, will be not only desperate but impossible. Oh Despair! thou art the sum and strength of Wretchedness, the Bitterness and Poison of a never ending *Death*, the Fuel and Flame of an unutterable Torturous Hell. Blessed is the Soul that never shall, never must feel thy racking Horrors in this, or another World.

## CHAP. XII.

### *Comforts in general.*

MY last Explicatory Undertaking, was to consider and describe the *Comforts*, which now cast so benign an Aspect and Influence upon this Holy Mans afflicted disconsolate Soul.

They may be considered either [Formally or Materially,] Formally in their proper Nature and true Constitution, as an inward refreshment and ease to the Heart.

Comfort is a Map of Paradise, the lovely Meet-Help and Succour of desolate, distressed Man, the Blessed Repast and Banquet of Holy Angels and Saints: The Uncreated, Eternal Heaven and Jubilee of God himself; the Light wherein he ever dwells, that spreads abroad its sweet reviving

ing

ing Rays, as largely, and liberally as its Fountain, the ſuper-intending Care and Goodneſs of Heaven, and eſpecially unto the humble and contrite Heart, ſetling it in a firm and durable Repoſe and Peace. And when the Sin of degenerate Man had baniſh'd it from the Earth, and his own Soul; the infinitely Wiſe and All-knowing God, the Father, the dearly beloved Word and Wiſdom of God, his only Begotten Son, and the Eternal Spirit of Truth and Grace, did by an ever adoreable aſtoniſhing Method of Goodneſs and Love, contrive a Retrieval thereof, that under its loſs Man might not continue the moſt miſerable of the whole Creation. 'Tis the ſweet reviving Breath of boundleſs Grace, and compaſſion in the Eternal Father, infuſing new Life and Vigour into Fainting, Groaning, Bleeding, Dying Hearts, and Enſpiriting them for God. A refreſhing Beam from the Son of Righteouſneſs, which infuſes Warmth, Strength and Soul, into the diſconſolate Heart of dejected Man, that lies benighted in a Hell of Miſery and Darkneſs: The Oyl of Life poured out by the Holy Ghoſt, upon a Benumbed, Frozen, Reſtive Soul, which gently turns the Wheels of Action in a ſmooth, free, ready, eaſie, ſpeedy Courſe, and continues them in an unwearied motion toward Heaven: A ſweet and lovely Paraphraſe upon the Promiſes, Ingraven in a Wounded Heart by the Finger of God: A powerful Antidote to the Poiſon of Tormenting Grief and Deſpair, ſweeter than Sorrow can be ſowre: An all-ſatisfying Foreraſt and Anticipation, of the never Intermitting, never Terminating Joys of Eternity.

When the Sovereign Majeſty of Heaven would Ingratiate himſelf, and though in a humble Demiſ-

ſion

ſion and Debaſement of his Glory, yet appear in his higheſt Lovelineſs to Man, 'tis in a Robe of Light, Joy, Comfort and Peace; and when a Wounded Spirit that's diſcouraged in its Work, by the preſſure of its own ſelf-created Woes, deſires to be entertained into, and impowred for, and chearfully to engage in his Service, it implores and ſues for the Joy of the Lord, to be its *Strength*. When God's *Heralds* have been denouncing War to *Rebels*, Vengeance againſt Enemies, thereby terrifying them into a War and Enmity againſt their Sins: He next Commiſſions them as his Embaſſadors, to revive thoſe troubled Souls with a meſſage of glad Tidings of Joy, and Peace, and Conſolation. 'Tis the refreſhing Dew of Heaven upon a barren heart, that has been ſcorched and parched with the fiery Indignation of the Almighty, which cauſes it to bring forth Fruit with rejoycing: The gracious Smile of the ever Bleſſed Jeſus, upon a weeping wounded Spirit, that's ſick of its ſins and ſores, ſick for the ſenſe of his *Love*: A hand let down from above, to lay hold upon, and bring up from the deep an oppreſſed Spirit, ſunk with the weight of its own woeful thoughts, into an unfathomable *Abyſs* of Miſeries: A returning Pillar of Cloud and Fire, to an *Iſraelite* indeed, that was bewildred and loſt, in a vaſt howling Wilderneſs of Danger and Horror, to direct and lead it with Joy to its Cœleſtial Reſt: A ſecure and welcome Port of ſafety and repoſe, for a weather-beaten Soul, that by the ſtorms and ſurges of Almighty Vengeance, hath been Shipwrack'd and ſplit all to pieces, in a Contrition and Humiliation for Sin: A Bed of eaſe and quiet for a weak and ſickly weary heart, which hath been wreſtling and labouring under the weighty

Load of Divine Wrath; ſet on, and made more grievous by the Laſhes of a Scourging Conſcience: A Heaven of unſpeakable Delight and Satisfaction, deſcending into, and raiſing up a dejected Mind, which it found deeply buried in a doleful Hell of Wretchedneſs and Woe. Oh ſweet and amiable Peace! How lovely are thy Looks? How dear and pleaſing thine Embraces? What art thou not that is good, deſirable, delightful, contenting, ſatisfying? Riches in Poverty, Health in Sickneſs, Honey in Life, Heart-eaſe in Death, the Glory of Eternity.

But to give a Logical Deſcription of it, *Formal Comfort is the inward Reſt, Quiet, Contentment, Satisfaction, Eaſe and Refreſhment of the Mind, ariſing from the View, Senſe, Conſideration, Application, and feeling of ſuch proper and ſuitable Remedies for all manner of Troubles, as anſwer the Neceſſities, Exigencies and Deſires of the Soul in all things, ſtrengthning for Work, ſupporting under Temptations, inſpiriting for Sufferings, chearfully to bear them, perfectly to conquer them, and everlaſtingly to triumph over them.*

Taken *Actively*, and *in Fieri*, it imports a Mans *applying to himſelf the things which God hath provided, to refreſh and ſtrengthen him.*

*Paſſively, a Man is comforted when upon the Application of ſuch things, the Mind, Heart and Conſcience are ſatisfyed, and ſettled within themſelves, in a calm and quiet Reſt and Peace.* This is Comfort in *facto eſſe*, as the Schools phraze it.

If we ſpeak properly, and according to the *Engliſh Tranſlation* here, This *Formal Comfort* is not that *Comfort* which the *Pſalmiſt* reports; but rather *the delight in his Soul*, which did, or might iſſue therefrom, as an effect from its immediate Cauſe,

Cauſe, and therefore is not a ſtranger to the Text.

Yet indeed, the *Comfort* here mentioned, is not to be underſtood *Formally*, but

*Objectively*, or *Materially*, for comforting things; as in *Phyſick*, a *Cordial* is not the *Comfort* the Heart receives, but the *Medicine*, which has Vertue and Power to *Comfort the Heart*, as a means under *Providence*.

In Diſcourſing to this, ſeveral things might be conſidered.

1. The Matter or Thing it ſelf, which comforts, which is God, his Being, Nature, Perfections, *&c.*

2. The Inſtrument, Vehicle, or Means.

1. Revealing, Tendering, Conveying; The Word, and in ſpecial, its Promiſes.

2. Receiving, Appropriating, Applying.

Faith { 1. In the Mind, Thoughts.
2. In the Heart and Will, Conſent.

3. The Condition or Qualification, without which no right to *Comfort* is poſſible.

*True Goodneſs*, particularly, *Goodneſs* in Diſtreſs.

4. *The Principal* immediate, *Efficient*,
*The Holy Ghoſt* the *Comforter*.

Some of theſe, I acknowledge, concern *Comfort Formally* conſidered, as well as *Materially*. For though the matter or thing Comforting, [*God*] have no cauſe, and the *Spirit* cannot be ſaid to be in reſpect hereof, an *Efficient*, but only of the *Formal Comfort*, or Satisfaction in our minds, and of the Inſtrument and Condition, the Word being of his Immediate Inſpiration, and *Sanctification*, his proper and peculiar Work: Yet the Word is a means to beget *Formal Comfort*, as well as

convey the matter of it; ſo alſo is *Faith*. And *Goodneſs* is a Qualification neceſſary to inward Peace, as well as right to the Material Cauſe of it.

I am not concern'd, except about the *Matter*, *Means*, revealing, containing, and the *Believing Thoughts*, that receive and apply; with the *Holineſs*, that prepares the Heart for Reception and Application of *Comfort*.

Whatever Comforts, is ſomething of, or from God, *The Father*, *Son*, *and Holy Ghoſt*; yet thoſe things from them, *Comfort* not in the ſame manner, as *they* do themſelves. The Word and Promiſes are a *Cordial*, as far as Meſſages of *Love* from Heaven, no otherwiſe: As they bring good News from our beſt Friend, they revive us; but nothing can give eaſe to our Minds, which doth not report ſomething of God. If our Troubles be *Spiritual* for our Sins, the aſſurance by any ſound Evidence, that God has pardoned them, diſpels our *Sorrow*, *Fear*, *and Deſpair*: The feeling that God has purged away their Filth, taken away their Dominion, quiets us, as an Evidence and Teſtimony, that he hath pardoned us, and is reconciled to us; but all this only as a token of *God's Love* to us. For a good Soul cannot ſit down with its own Mercy, without the God of Mercy. Nothing Spiritually Comforts on Earth, but what will ſolace in Heaven. There God alone is the Eternal Ravihment of glorified Souls. Now God, as the matter of our Comfort, ſolaces us merely as apprehended, and applied by *Believing Thoughts*. If we think not of him, we derive no Content from him; and our Thoughts taking in ſome comfortable Notion of God, lay it before our Concupiſcible and Iraſcible Affections, that being embraced

braced by the former, it may appeaſe, ſtill, and quiet the other; which is heedfully to be obſerved, this being the true and natural Method to attain ſolid, and ſubſtantial Peace, and Conſolation: For they are Brutiſh, not Rational Comforts, that we are not led to by Light in the Mind, obſerving the ſuitableneſs of the Object to our Condition, which prevails with our Will, to cloſe with, and embrace it. Till this be done, our Paſſions cannot be rationally calmed. God doth not work upon them, as *Chriſt* upon the raging Sea, by way of Empire, and immediate Power, to huſh them in a moment by Miracle. That Peace which ſprings in the Conſcience immediately, without any antecedent Actings, and Perceptions of the Mind, or Election of the Will, is Deluſory, not to ſay, *Satanical.*

There's nothing that can any ways Comfort, but God is that very thing, either *Formally* or *Eminently:* He is the ſumm and ſubſtance of all Appetibles, Eligibles, Comfortables, as the *Chief Good* and Happineſs of Man; who, as he wants nothing for his own everlaſting ſolace and contentation, ſo neither for ours: Whatever is of a refreſhing Influence, either to Body or Mind, is the Ordination of God, both in its Matter, and that peculiar Formality: For he both made all things, and endowed them with all their Powers and Vertues, which all are ſuperlatively in himſelf; *i. e.* either in his Nature or Power, in Eſſence or Equivalence. God's Love is a Comfort to our Souls, and God is Love. Meat and Drink are a comfort to our Bodies; God is not theſe, but he can create and give them, and in Heaven ſupplies the want of them, by cauſing us not to need them, and giving us better in himſelf, that Countervails

them. Thus 'tis also in all other Cases; whatever satisfies us, is from him, is in him. *Thy Comforts delight* [*or look favourably upon*] *my Soul. Thy Comforts which thou* [Art Given].

## CHAP. XIII.

### *Comforts in God.*

I. THE Comforts which God *is*, delight the Soul. These or none. For nothing issuing from God, is greater or better than himself, He *is* much more than all without him, therefore a more sufficient satisfaction; both because there is a plenitude of Perfection in him, and because he can inlarge the capacity of the Recipient, and quicken the perceptive Powers, more exquisitely to sense, and relish the Sweetness of all those delectable Excellencies that adorn his Nature. Now as God is every thing which is comfortable, so every thing in God is a Well-spring of over-flowing Consolation, to a good Heart, his Being, Names, Attributes, *&c.*

1. His Being or Existence. That there is a God, therefore a regarder of Goodness, infinitely concerned to promote it, to support it, to reward it. The First without beginning, the Last without end. Who possesses all Being in himself eminently, and gives Being to all things, that have a positive Entity, and that *very good*, *Gen.* 1. 31. Without whose Agency, neither thy Sorrows, nor thy Comforts can be; and if they receive their *Being*, then also their *Balance* from the best hand in the Universe. One that has Being so, as nothing else can; not thy Sins, not thy Sorrows, not thy spiritual Enemies, *&c.* not an arbitrary pre-

precarious Exiſtence; but neceſſary, uncontroulable, ſelf-originating, unalterable, unperiſhable: To which all other Beings are nothing in compariſon, faint, evanid, fading, *Iſai.* 40. 17. *There's none beſide.* As his own Being is the greateſt reality, ſo can he make thoſe Comforts which depend upon it, to adminiſter abundantly more reality of refreſhment, than there can poſſibly be real evil in all the Miſeries of a thouſand Worlds. He will be and abide by us (when all elſe fail us,) as an everlaſting Fulneſs of all Eſſential Conſolations.

¶. 2. His Names and Titles.

*El.*] Verſe 1. *Elohim*] Ver. 7. 22, 23. *A ſtrong Plurality*, in Unity of ſingular Excellency: Sufficient therefore to relieve: for he is

*El ſhaddai*] (an additional, not indeed expreſs in the Pſalm, but neceſſary to be mentioned in order to the explaining of the following *Jehovah*, ſo often uſed here) God All-ſufficient, or Almighty. In him therefore is there abundantly enough to ſatisfie intenſively all Appetites, in all their extents and poſſibilities. This Name he gives himſelf, with reſpect to his making Promiſes, wherein mercies are exhibited as future; whence it ſecures to us fully his ſingular Good Will, and engages our Faith and Hope, and improves, and heightens them into an Aſſurance, that Bleſſings and Comforts, now out of our hands, ſhall in due Seaſon (which himſelf is fitteſt to chuſe) be put into our poſſeſſion by him: Under his Name

JEHOVAH], mention'd *Ver.* 1. 3, 5, 11, 14, 17, 18, 22, 23. the proper and immediate reaſon of his giving himſelf this Name, being his preſent purpoſe to fulfil with his Hand, what he had ſpoke with his Mouth long before, and give actual Being by his Power and Providence to that, which only

had a poſſible Vertual Being, in his Promiſe made under the Name of *Elſhaddai*. This then is a Name, intimating, that He is not a Promiſer afar off, but a Performer at hand, ready to comfort us in, and ſave us out of our Spiritual Thraldom, under Corruption, Temptation, and Affliction of Body and Mind. And being

*Adonai*, (which the Jews alway read inſtead of the *Tetragrammaton* (as the Name *Jehovah* is called) except where they are together) *Lord* and *Soveraign* over All; he hath a Right and Power to diſpoſe of all Perſons, and Things, according to the good pleaſure of his own Will, and cannot be controul'd in his Purpoſes, or Performances, by any, but at their Peril. Whence 'tis alway likely to be beſt with thoſe that in reverence and humility, ſubject themſelves freely to his Government, which is deſignedly manag'd for the Good and Comfort of his Subjects, and the final Trouble and Diſquiet only of his Incureable Enemies; therefore muſt and will for his own Glory, and his Servants higheſt Advantage, overrule, and overcome the Malignity and Malice of Hell, the Madneſs and Rage of the World, and the Corruptions, and Confuſions of our own Hearts; all which, without his Interpoſal, would be irremediable and intolerable. And as

*Jah*, *Ver.* 7. 12. 'Tis congruous and decent for him to do all. It highly becomes a Nature ſo excellent, ſo communicative, and bountiful, to diſpenſe of thoſe Delights, in which he for ever dwells, and ſolaces himſelf; to ſuch of his Creatures, as place their ſole felicity in Him, and cannot, will not take pleaſure in any thing without him.

¶. 3. *His Attributes*, are a rich Mine of Comfort;

fort; both ſingly and conjunct; as divers Conceptions, but one only indiviſible *Perfection.*

§. 1. *His Wiſdom and Omniſcience*, Ver. 9. 10, 11. 'Twas a Queſtion only becoming the Frenzy and Folly of a degenerate wicked Heart. *How doth God know? And is there Knowledge in the moſt High? Pſal.* 73. 11. Yes that there is, as you ſhall know to your ſorrow; but the Godly do experience it to their wonderful Satisfaction. *All the Evils we feel, He knows very well*, though we cannot; nay, though we will not, though we dare not repreſent or deſcribe them; and a Friend's Knowledge of its Troubles, is ſome eaſe to an oppreſſed Heart. But our Griefs are not only the Objects of his Underſtanding, but the Diſpoſitions of his Wiſdom, which being infinitely more comprehenſive than ours, did deſign, and knows how to effect our greateſt Good out of that, which our ſhallow Capacities apprehend to be the greateſt Evil. 'Tis no little *Solace*, that boundleſs *Wiſdom*, which can never project Evil, doth perfectly ſee and know this to be beſt for us, which it diſpences to us: And though now we cannot fathom the *Myſteries* of this manifold *Wiſdom*, Eph. 3. 10. (as how ſhould Finite comprehend Infinite?) Yet the Reaſons of its Proceedure, will be unfolded hereafter, to the general Satisfaction of the whole World. Have we not then ſufficient ground to acquieſce, and be pleas'd with that now, (altho' we cannot dive into its Methods) which with the higheſt complacency we ſhall acquieſce and rejoyce in for ever, when we more truly underſtand it?

Beſide, Infinite Wiſdom is ſtored with Means, Devices, and Ways, to comfort us, beyond all we are able to conceive. The incomparable Riches of Divine Conſolation, are owing to the inexhauſtible

ſtible Treaſures of that Wiſdom, which can find out ſuch as are moſt ſuitable, and moſt ſeaſonably and effectually apply them: And foreſeeing what may be a Bar to them, can tell how to uſe the moſt proper Methods to remove it, this being its moſt genuine work, to know, chuſe and uſe, the moſt accommodate and efficacious Means, to bring about the moſt excellent End. We triumph in the enjoyment of ſuch Relief in a Friend on Earth; Have we not abundantly more reaſon, to ſolace our ſelves in the friendly aſpect and ſuperintendence of ſuch an infinite Perfection in Heaven? *Is Satan* continually injecting Terrors or Troubles, or exciting diſguſtful horrid Imaginations? Does he appear in the guiſe of the Fool, and ſay, *in* thy *heart there is no God*, &c.? *Pſal.* 14. 1. Does he with *Job*'s Wife put on the deſperate Bedlam, and bid thee *Curſe God*, &c. *and dye? Job* 2. 9. Does he perſonate the Cheating Knave, and adviſe thee to defraud either *God* of his due Worſhip and Honour, or Man of his due Reſpect and Right? Does he transform himſelf into an Angel of Light, and engage thee to be wiſe and *Righteous overmuch? Eccleſ.* 7. 16. Or laſtly, Does he come in his own Form, to invite thee to Lying, *Pride*, *Malice*, *Revenge*, *Slaunder*, *Backbiting*, &c. his proper Sins, in which, with a daring Impudence, he would out-brave and out-face even his *Maker*, in his *Accuſations of the Brethren*, &c.? Whatever his *Methods*, Eph. 6. 11. or *Wiles*, *Deviſes*, 2 Cor. 2. 11. *Snares*, 1. Tim. 3. 7. 2 Tim. 2. 26. *Depths*, *Rev.* 2. 24. Whatever his *Stratagems*, *Policies*, are, to delude, defile, diſquiet, or deſtroy thee, however cunningly, craftily managed: Yet ſtill is he not too wiſe for God, who well knows how to defeat all his Deſignments, and amongſt infinite other,

other, has this one Method to lead thee to Comfort, (even when thine Adversary hath out-witted and got the better of thee, and is leading thee into Temptation, Trouble, and Torment,) *viz.* to bring thee thorow the narrow way of *Repentance*, to a *New Life of Grace, Peace, Joy, and Consolation*, present and eternal. This he doth oftentimes with Man, *Job* 33. 28, 29. Read from the 14th. to the 31st. *Job* 28, 28. *Unto Man he said, behold the fear of the Lord*, (true Religiousness) *that is Wisdom, and to depart from evil*, (true Repentance) *that is Understanding*. He knows how to rule the raging of that Sea of Sorrow, Terror, and Anguish, wherewith the *Devil* attempts to overwhelm thee, and shipwrack all thy Hopes, and Happiness; and so turns the Storm into a Calm of Godly sorrow, that Satans Creature yields, and gives place to the Creation of God, and the Grief which God exhales, does issue in the fruit of the Lips, *Peace*, of the same extraction; and thus is Satan over-reach'd and baffled in his most subtle Contrivances, and his Machinations to ruine our Comfort, become means for its Establishment. *Is.* 57. 19.

But if his own immediate Actings be seconded with the Agency of his Instruments, that all the Politicks on Earth combine with those of *Hell*, to overturn our security and rest: Yet are they never the nearer their Purpose, of subverting the Counsels of *Heaven*, for the solace of our troubled Hearts; but rather promote them, whilst they drive us nearer God, as our everlasting Refuge, and Sanctuary, in whom we may be sure to find a Fulness of Joy and Compensation. Is all the Carnal Wisdom on Earth set on the rack, to devise the Ruine of True Religion, and Thee in the Profession and Practice of it? Are wicked Men thy parti-

particular Foes, in a Confederacy againſt thee, contriving thy Deſtruction in Spirituals and Temporals? Yet where-ever they *deal wiſely, proudly*, cruelly, He is *above them?* Art thou thy ſelf, are all Men elſe at a loſs in their Thoughts, either, how Religion ſhould be ſecured, in whole, or in part, when at any time its Enemies conſpire againſt it; or *how* Jacob *ſhould ariſe when he is very ſmall*; or how thy Perſonal Intereſt ſhould be ſafeguarded, or how thy Health reſtored, or Death prevented, or Deliverance be wrought under ſome grievous Calamity, or any Mercy obtain'd for Soul or Body, thy ſelf, thy Friends, or the *Church* and *Nation?* Be not ſolicitous, the All-comprehending Wiſdom of *Heaven* can never be at a Loſs, this unſearchable underſtanding has all Poſſibilities preſent in view, and cannot but chuſe the beſt for Himſelf, for Thee, for All; and it ſeldom begins of its Work, till all be at their Wits end; when every thing elſe fails, and the Wiſdom of Men has given up all for gone, *Divine Wiſdom* reſumes the Work, and glorifies its ſelf, in bringing it to Perfection. In ſhort, all the Artifices of Earth and Hell, cannot invent or reduce into Circumſtances, ſo deplorable and deſperate, as to overmatch the Contrivance of Infinite Wiſdom for our Comfort, under and after them; its Proviſions are truly Catholick, extending to all poſſible Caſes, Conditions, Seaſons, Places, and Perſons; whereof the Holy Scriptures are a full Evidence, as a legible Declaration of the Unfathomable *Wiſdom of God. Here are the Rivers, whoſe Streams make glad the City of God*, Pſal. 46. 4. Oh the Adoreable Plenitude of the written *Word of God*, which comprehends the whole Counſel of God for our Illumination, Effectual Calling, Sanctification, Juſtification,

ſification, Comfort, and Eternal Salvation! There is nothing deviſed by the Infinite Underſtanding of God, for the Eaſe and Quiet of troubled Hearts, but which is contained in the Bible, a Tranſcript whereof upon the Heart, creates a Life of Joy, Peace, and Reſt. *God's Wiſdom* ſpeaks Peace to us, in no other Language than that of the Word. 'Tis indeed viſible in his Works of Creation, and Providence, which are under its Conduct, and bear its lively Characters, but theſe ſcarce intelligible, without the Sacred Writings. Here only is all perſpicuous and plain, that's needful, either to purifie, or pacify the Conſcience. What a World of Conſolatory Matter is couched in this one Pſalm, will appear anon: What then is there in the whole Book of God? Judge of the Immenſe Ocean, by this Little Rivulet. Admire and Reverence that incomparable Abſtract of the Wiſdom of Heaven, in theſe Lively Oracles, and hence derive all thy Conſolations.

§. 2. This Wiſdom is not alone, nor in this Caſe, a Self-mover, but goes upon the Errand and Deſigns of Infinite Gooodneſs: An Attribute brim-full of Solace, Joy and Reſt; as our Pſalmiſt found, *Ver.* 18. eſpecially, and every where, *Ver.* 12, 13, 14, 15, 17. 19, 21. Indeed, every Requeſt in the Pſalm ſuppoſes it, and every Aſſertion refers to it, even his Complaints are Addreſſes to it, and all his Expectations are from it; 'tis the good Blood that runs in every Vein, not a Verſe but points at it. Now, as Wiſdom chuſes the Method and Means of applying Comfort, and pitches upon ſuch as are moſt accommodate in particular: So Goodneſs adminiſters the Matter in general. Every thing that creates the light of Gladneſs and Conſolation, in a dark benighted,

nighted troubled ſoul, is a ſpark, a beam of *Goodneſs*.

The Goodneſs of God lies in Two Things, *Love* and *Holineſs*. Did I call them Two? They are both but only *Love*. *Love* in us, is *Holineſs*, as a Conformity to the whole Law of God: *Holineſs* in God, is nothing but *Love* to himſelf, as the alone perfect Law and Standard of all Incomprehenſible Excellency and Glory. But to conſider them as diſtinct.

*Love* is that illuſtrious greateſt Light amongſt the Divine Perfections, the benign Rays whereof, are plenteouſly reflected through the Sun of Righteouſneſs, upon wretched and miſerable Man. *God is Love*, 1 *Joh.* 4. 16. *and Love in its Perfection is God*; that *Love*, which *God* is, is *God*, and diffuſes its ſweet Influences upon us, in wonderful variety. Not that it is other than Unity indiviſible, invariable in it ſelf; but that it meets with ſeveral reſpects, and produces divers effects in us. We are Sinners, the guilt it pardons, the filth it purges, the power of Sin it ſubdues. We are miſerable through ſin; *Love* lays it to heart, that's *Mercy*: Is afflicted in our Afflictions, there's *Compaſſion*; has yerning Bowels towards us, which is *Pity*; bears much at our hands, and this is *Patience*; ſuſpends the Puniſhment due to our ſin, either for an Indefinite time, therefore called *Forbearance*; or a great while, whence 'tis ſtiled *Long-ſuffering*; or exempts us wholly, under the Name of *Sparing-Mercy*; or deals moderately with us, in *Gentleneſs* and *Tenderneſs*: We want many good things, eſpecially Himſelf: *Benevolence* wills our Good; *Bounty* and *Kindneſs* impart All to Us; *Graciouſneſs* does All freely: Oh Aſtoniſhingly Rich and Glorious Well-ſpring of Everlaſting Conſolation! There's no Exigence befals Man, either

either thro' emptineſs, or miſery, that is deſtitute of a Perfection in Infinite *Love*, to make a peculiar and accommodate Relief and Supply. Divine *Goodneſs* bears ſuch a ſingular reſpect to our indigent Nature, that notwithſtanding its individual *Singleneſs* and *Oneneſs*, it does as it were parcel out it ſelf, into a multiplicity of ſweet refreſhing Cordials, in Condeſcenſion to our Infirmity, that in it we may have a particular Satisfaction, for every diſtinct Appetite, a proper Remedy for every ſingle Malady. There's no Caſe, in which we can need, or deſire Comfort, but there is a Revelation of ſome comfortable Perfection in God, which ſpeaks directly to it, and adminiſters a ſuccour and ſupport to us, no leſs than Infinite; that is, incomprehenſibly more extenſive, and Intenſive, than our Circumſtances can be neceſſitous, or dolorous. Indeed, nothing comforts but *Love*; nothing more diſquiets, than ſenſe of Enmity, Hatred, Anger, Diſpleaſure. The more we are concern'd in any, the more pleaſing is Reſpect from them, and an unloving Deportment more grievous. We are not much affected with the love of Strangers, but rejoyce in the Good-will of our Neighbours, our Friends, our Relations, expecting it ſhould bear proportion to our Intereſt in them, and theirs in us, elſe it pleaſes not. We muſt have more Love from thoſe in our Vicinity, than from Aliens, from intimate Acquaintance, than either; from our Fleſh and Blood, than all, or it troubles us. But the due meaſure (nay if it be an exceſs) of affection is moſt taking, we are moſt at eaſe under it. Again, as the Relation, ſo the Quality of Perſons muſt vary the degree of Love, or we are not at reſt. The regard of a mean Man does not ſo much delight us, as of the Great; that of

Bad

Bad Men is not ſo ſweet as that of the Good. Further, thoſe we expect moſt good from, moſt refreſh us with their Love; where we lay out no hopes, from thoſe, (ſuch is the Selfiſhneſs of our Nature) we are not ſolicitous to gain any Love. So we are moſt earneſtly deſirous of the Affections of thoſe, whoſe Anger can, and is likely, and engaged to do us the greateſt Hurt: whom we therefore have reaſon moſt to fear; if we can win their hearts, 'tis a wonderful Contentation. Now God, the neareſt, greateſt, moſt potent *Neighbour*, *Friend* or *Enemy*, is not only *Loving*, but *Love* its ſelf, in the abſtract; not limited in kind or degree, but unmeaſurable, infinite *Love*; ſuch on the contrary, is his Wrath alſo. Of all other, his *Love* is moſt capable (and engaged too) to do us the greateſt Good, if we be capable of it: His Hatred and Anger, like to do us the greateſt harm, if we do not betake our ſelves, to the refuge and ſecurity of his Love. But he who is eſſential unconfineable *Graciouſneſs*, does with a natural Affection regard us, as the Work of his hands in *Creation*, with a Paternal, Conjugal Reſpect, embrace us as his Workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus to good Works; if forſaking all other, we cleave unto him with full purpoſe of heart, in a ſincere Child-like, Spouſe-like Affection, being again begotten by his Word and Spirit to a lively Hope, and ſo in Marriage-Covenant with him. This then is a Comfort, as large as its Subject; Divine Love, a ſatisfaction as boundleſs as the *Deity*; for it infinitely pleaſes even God himſelf: Infinite though he be, therefore is ſufficient ſure to adminiſter a Content to us, ſweet and great beyond all Expreſſion, all Cogitation. The Holy Men of God, which the Scripture propounds for

our

our Examples, alway took Sanctuary here, in the assaults of their most grievous Troubles and Temptations. *Jer.* 31. 12. *They shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord*, &c. *And their Soul shall be as a watered Garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all.* 13. *I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoyce from their sorrow.* 14. *And I will satiate the soul of the Priests with fatness, and my People shall be satisfied with my Goodness, saith the Lord.* Psal. 119. 76. *Let I pray thee thy merciful kindness be for my Comfort*, &c. And indeed, let the storms rage, and the sea roar, and beat as high as it can, there will for ever be sure Anchor-hold, for a good Soul, upon the Rock of Ages: Fix there, and thou canst never shipwrack; nay, if thou canst but weakly and waveringly, with a trembling heart and hand, hold this *Love*, be not discouraged; for with a strong unconquerable hand, it holds thee, *Joh.* 10. 28, 29. All other Divine Perfections minister to his *Love*, which has already bestowed the greatest Gifts: Himself, as an overflowing *Jordan* of enriching Goodness; His Only-begotten *Son*, *Joh.* 3. 16. The choicest Blessing, and the surest Pledge of all other, *Rom.* 8. 32. Nay, thy self to thy self freed from the bondage of Sin and *Satan*. Though I be in no desireable Circumstances, as to other things, yet if I be mine own Man, and enjoy a just Liberty of Body and Mind, in no slavery of Spirit and Condition; I can sing over my other Misfortunes, especially when I can read my own Felicity in the Misery of others, through a Thraldom, which I escape. Indeed, my Commiserations impress some part of their Calamity upon my Soul, but 'tis countervail'd and over-top'd by the Comfort of mine own Indemnity. But

there can be no liberty under the Dominion of Sin, nor any true Self-enjoyment, till I enjoy *God*, and my ſelf in him, in whom I have my beſt and ſweeteſt *Being*, *Motion*, and *Life*. And though I enjoy my Civil and Moral Freedom, which is no little Comfort, yet Vaſſalage to the Prince of *Darkneſs*, is an Affliction more grievous, than the other can be ſolacing. When a *Good Man is ſatisfied from* [of, with] *himſelf*, Prov. 14. 14. 'tis only as far as the Goodneſs of God dwells in him, and he in it. For if I poſſeſs not God, I have nothing with a Bleſſing, therefore not with Comfort. I have no Right to comfortable Thoughts, contenting Enjoyments, no not to my ſelf, and in my ſelf. For what am I that is good, what am I not that is evil, without God; and what ſatisfaction can I receive in that which is evil, as I my ſelf, and every thing in me will unavoidably be, if not antidoted and animated by the Goodneſs of God? Men are not more miſerable, in a Deprival of all the Content of their Lives, than in the Dereliction of God. God gave me my ſelf as a Loan of Love; what I am I owe to Him; but by my ſin, I have loſt both my ſelf and Him: If now by a new Charter, He reſtore to me a better Right to Himſelf, and to my ſelf, in His Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, whoſe I am by Right of *Redemption*, and not mine own; if He re-inveſt me in a Liberty to enjoy my ſelf in Him, which I could not do under ſo bad a Maſter, ſo cruel a Tyrant as the Devil; this is a piece of the choiceſt Happineſs which I can enjoy on this ſide Heaven. Liberty to ſin, is the moſt uncomfortable Bondage: Neceſſity to ſerve God, the moſt ſolacing Liberty. The moſt of this do we enjoy, when we live moſt in, and are ſwallowed up of

the

the Love of God. Corruption is a Dungeon, a Prison, a Pit; *God loves* us out of it, *Isa.* 38. 17. *into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*, Rom. 8. 21. *Love* is the Wealth of *Heaven* and the *World*, a Treasure invaluable, in Comparison whereof, every thing, all the Riches, Honours, Pleasures, all the Substance and Glory of the World, is contemptible, *Cant.* 8. 7. Every Comfort is comprehended in it, 'tis the Life and Soul of all; they are but Carrion-Contents, that are possest without it. Oh incomparable, incomprehensible *Love!* How hast thou even out-done thy self in thy Provisions for the Consolation of inconsiderable Man? What infinite Desires could ever have wish'd, what infinite Goodness could ever have bestowed a Gift greater than Infinite? *God's Love* gives no less, and sure it can no greater.

*Love* is all Comfort, and *Holiness* in God, is not a Barren Womb, but Pregnant also with the sweetest Consolations. From this Topic, the Psalmist derived Refreshment to his thoughtful mind, *Ver.* 20. *Shall the Throne of Iniquity have Fellowship with thee?* The Quære carries in its bowels a Negative Resolution. *No*, it shall not. Its Iniquity, and thy Sanctity, are altogether Incompatible: Though it attempt, yet cannot it prevail, to overturn thy Throne; 'twill therefore assuredly be overturned by it. *Ver.* 15. *Judgment shall return to Righteousness* [ אַחֲרֵי ] *and after it, all the Upright in Heart.* I take אַחֲרֵי there, to be significative of Time, as well as Place. The Expression is allusive, supposing Judgment and *Righteousness* were parted to a great Distance, and that *Righteousness* was in a settled, fix'd Habitation, from which Judgment, as a thing in motion, was departed: And 'tis true, *Righteousness* is of a

Sunt certi denique fines, quos ultrà citraque nequit consistere rectum.

stable, firm, invariable nature: Judgment or Proceedures in Law, are changeable, sometimes wrong, sometimes right; now on this side, then on the other, depending upon the mutable Constitution of the *Judges*. Whence 'tis, that Judgment is here represented as a Traveller from home, but upon the Return, in which motion it should never rest, till it (which had been so long absent) got to the abode of *Righteousness* again. Unrighteous Judgment did then prevail, but begun to be weary of it self, and at length must down, and *Righteous Judgment* be set up and established; which, when once accomplished, the upright in heart, would certainly be advanced. Let but true Justice obtain, and immediately after that, Upright Men will return out of the Retirements, into which Unrighteousness had driven them, and be in repute again. *Goodness* cannot be suppresst by *Justice*, but only by Injury; and when it is turned out of doors, cannot be introduced, except by the Soveraign Goodness of God, to which its Restitution is here ascribed, *Ver.* 14. as a Fruit of his Abode with, and constant Adherence to his People. The whole Process then of the Prophet's Reasoning, is this; *Although God's People be now oppress'd, and ruin'd by the violent Perversion of Judgment: Yet God will not alway permit it to be so, but will establish Righteous Judgment first, and then relieve his People by it.* Divine Purity then, will not long permit the Dominion of Unrighteousness. God's *Holiness* will e're long harass all Unholiness out of the World, and confine it forever unto Hell. There shall be none in thy sight abroad, there shall be none in thy heart within. That which is thy greatest Discomfort on Earth, which muddies thy Thoughts, dis-

diſquiets thy mind, racks and tortures thy Conſcience, diſcompoſes thy Affections, blaſts thy Hopes, ſowres thy Joys, burthens thy whole Soul, makes Heaven and Earth groan, and ſigh in Pain; ſhall finally give place to the *Divine Nature*, which the Promiſes bring thee in part, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. and Heaven will perfect. Oh bleſſed ſolacing Hope, a ſecure Anchor in the deepeſt Sea of Sorrows! Art thou at preſent in Affliction for thy unholineſs: Know that this very trouble is a diſpenſation of boundleſs Love and Sanctity, directed by unfathomable Wiſdom, and of moſt illuſtrious Wiſdom, acted by unconceivable Love and Holineſs, for thy higheſt advantage; to embitter thy Corruptions, ſeparate them from thy Soul, and prepare thee for the embraces of the tendereſt Affections of Heaven, and its everlaſting Joys and Reſt. Neither can there any other Temptation or Affliction befall thee, without God's leave, and his Goodneſs can no more be excluded out of his deſignments than his knowledge; even his Permiſſions are ſubſervient to the purpoſes of his Love, nor can any thing betide us, which will yeild an Argument to prove that he is not Good, any more than that he is not God. Whatever Perplexities ſink thy Heart, if they have a tendency to defile thee, they are Enemies to Divine Purity, and it will overcome them, cannot be vanquiſh'd by them; if they tend to diſquiet thee, the unboundable Love that embraces thee, will not, cannot leave thee to ſuccumb, and finally to deſpond under them; if Spiritual, this infinitely gracious Spirit, is an Adverſary to them, and will maſter them; if Temporal, there is a Remedy againſt them in the Goodneſs of God which is Eternal.

*Divine Goodneſs* anſwers all things, not as Money, limitedly, and with reſtriction, but univerſally, and infinitely. In it is the ſubſtance of all real Good, in it Compenſation for all Evil, elſe could it not be, what it cannot but be, infinite. *A Feaſt is made for Laughter, and Wine maketh glad the* * *Life.* Oft in Scripture do we find comforting the Heart, attributed to our Natural Repaſt, by Meat and Drink, *Gen.* 18. 5. *Judg.* 19. 5, 8, &c. Poor Comforts, in compariſon of *Jeſus*, whoſe Body is *Meat* indeed, whoſe Blood is *Drink* indeed, *Joh.* 6. 48. to the 59th. *Wine makes glad the Heart of God and Man*, Judg. 9. 13. Pſal. 104. 15. *But the Love of Chriſt is better*, Cant. 1. 2. *And more to be remembred*, Ver. 4. The Bread of Life, and the Waters of Life, are the very Life of all Comforts, the Sweetneſs of all Comforts and Joys. Any Mercy enoy'd with the Love of God, is ſweet indeed. Whence in the *Return of the Ranſomed of the Lord with Songs, and everlaſting Joy upon their heads*, Iſa. 51. 11, 12. Jer. 31. 11, 12. 'Tis Propheſied, That *They ſhall flow together to the Goodneſs of the Lord, for Wheat, and for Wine, and for Oyl; and for the Young of the Flock, and the Herd; and their Soul ſhall be as a Watered Garden*, &c. Yea, there 'tis. The Bleſſings of this Life, are then good indeed, when the Donation of the *Goodneſs* of the *Lord*, *Divine Love* with them, gives them a Reliſh incomparable.

Eccl. 10. 19. * חיים; *The Lives, or Living.*

Or, *Truly Meat, & truly Drink.*

*Job* ſometimes conſulted his Bed for Comfort, *Job* 7. 13. and 'tis no little ſatisfaction, to enjoy the quiet Repoſe of a ſingle Night: But what are all the downy Contents of this Nature, to the Everlaſting

verlasting Repose and Rest, both of Body and Soul in the Love of God; who, though he be an ever-living Activity, yet is an ever-loving, quiet, resting Place, for all that having been wearied out, with the Sins, and Labours, and Troubles, and Miseries of a Cumbersome World, betake themselves to him, as their only Contentation. *Cant.* 3. King *Solomon* (as a Type of Christ) made Himself [אפריון] a Conjugal Bed, the midst thereof, being [רצוף] Strowed with *Love, for the Daughters of Jerusalem.* A Bed of Ease indeed: The Whole World cannot Afford a Bed as soft as *Love*; as sweet as the refreshing Love of an infinitely Lovely, and *Loving God.*

*This the Original Word may seem indeed most properly to signifie, from the 7th. Verse, where the Espousals plainly refer to this; that Exhortation being grounded upon this Narration.*

I have read of a Man, who not content with Epicureism in Retail, resolv'd at once to gratifie every Sence with an accumulated Association of all imaginable Sensualities; yet all was only the Swinish Pleasure of a Day: But there is an Eternity of Delights in the Favour of God, first to the Soul, but redounding to the Sence also. *Truly Light is sweet, and 'tis good for the Eyes to behold the Sun,* ('tis a Periphrasis of Life, as the Connexion with the following Verse demonstrates) *Eccl.* 11. 7, 8. How delicious is the Flavour and Fragrancy of Odours, and the inexplicable Varieties and Ravishments of Sounds? *&c.* But are these worthy to be thought of, in Comparison of the ever Refreshing Light of God's Countenance, the Never-fading Delights of Divine Love and Goodness, the Unimitable Splendour of the *Sun of Righteousness,* who is the *Brightness of* *Mal.* 4. 2.

*Heb.* 1. 2. *his Fathers Glory, the savour of Christ's Precious Oyntments*, Cant. 1. 3. The rapturous Melody of the Celestial Quire, but above all the every thing Harmonious, Beautiful, Lovely, Glorious in the Divine Nature; wherein our very sense shall be in a generous transport with the highest incomparable, supersensual, everlasting Gratifications; much more our Minds. For the Goodness of God is every thing, pleasing, profitable, honest in the utmost eminency of Glory. There's no mole in this Beauty, no spots in this Sun, no Night to this Day; but an immense and eternal variety of all delectable Excellencies in an invariable unity of unblemishable Perfection, nothing to give a check to the Appetite, to interrupt and abate the pleasure of Enjoyment, or put a period to the solace accruing from it.

It singularly pleases a Man to be well thought of, and well provided for. When Men are low, yet if their Reputation run high, it bears up their Spirits in the depression of their Estates, and as Noble Blood in the Veins is by many accounted an essential Dignity, when their Wealth and Substance falls into detriment, that their Heart cannot stoop to any servile Offices or Imployments, below the Grandeur of its more stately and generous Pulsations; their Glory they think shines as the Sun through a Cloud, and is like a *Cordial Elixir* in a fainting fit of Fortune: So Credit of both kinds [Fame Trust] both as it imports the Honour of a fair Reputation, and Good Name, and as it entitles a Man to a right in the kindness of his Friend, and the belief of all Men; that every one speaks well of him, is ready to do well to him, all Honour him, all Credit him, and freely Concredit their all with him; this is valued as much as

Money

Money in the Purſe: The Wiſeſt of Men prefers it as more eligible, *Prov.* 22. 1. and affirms that *it makes the Bones fat*, *Prov.* 15. 30. But if the Love of God put a value upon us, (and worthleſs that we are, we have nothing elſe to recommend us) as the Kings Stamp upon a Braſs Farthing; if he ennoble us with his Grace, that we can derive our Pedegree and Extraction from Heaven, through the *New Birth*, this is the trueſt, ſweeteſt, nobleſt Satisfaction. We are indeed the baſeſt (through Sin) of the whole Creation. God made us at firſt, through his Image, next in honour to the Holy Angels, *Pſal.* 8. 5. We by our Apoſtacy and Corruption, make our ſelves not a little lower than Devils; and in this debaſement does Divine Goodneſs find us; but here it does not leave us. *Love*, and *Love* alone exalts us, and crowns us with *Glory*, *Dignity*, and *Honour*; and how high we are in the account of *Love*, (however baſe in our ſelves) is demonſtrated by the price it was willing to pay for our Redemption. Nothing rais'd us to this height in the eſtimate of Love, but only Love, according to *Deut.* 7. 7, 8. *The Lord did not ſet his Love upon you becauſe ye were moe*, &c. *But becauſe the Lord loved you*, &c. His Love was its own and only motive, and why ſhould it not? What can be a more noble Incitement to it, than the Glory of its moſt excellent communicative Nature? What mov'd it at firſt to deſign an Object to diffuſe its benign influences upon? What lovely qualities were in a non-entity, to draw it out into ſuch admirable Condeſcentions? Let it then go no leſs than ſelf-ſufficient, all-ſufficient, without the ſubſidiary invitement of all external Objects. Divine Goodneſs

*——Nobilitas ſola eſt atq; unica virtus.*

neſs neither needs nor deſires a Procatarctick cauſe. And this is a Comfort unſpeakable. Were I to bring my wellcome to Heaven, and to be dignified with the honour of ſo renowned a degree of Perfection, as to be able to ſtand upon my Reputation before God, and not beg his good Opinion but merit it, the Conſcience of my deficiency and demerit, would for ever confound me. But ſince Love brings my all with it, and its arguments to reſpect me, are derived from its own Bowels, and its height is ſo wonderful, that there can be no proportion in the higheſt created goodneſs to it, ſo as to deſerve it; and its depth ſo unfathomable, that the greateſt miſdeſervings cannot put a bar to the liberty of its actings for the relief even of the *Chief of Sinners*. Have I not a World of reaſon to caſt off all melancholy deſponding Imaginations, and ſolace my ſelf in this Paradiſe of everlaſting *Love* and *free Grace?* Oh Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory!

1 *Tim.* 1. 15.

To be well provided for is next. The World had rather live by Sight than Faith. He's but ill to live, all whoſe Wealth is in another Man's Pocket; and may be puft away with the malevolent Breath of a third Man. A Bird in the hand is beſt. Faith and Hope are beggarly things in the eſtimate of moſt Men. A competency of Neceſſaries in Poſſeſſion, more contents us than a World in Reverſion. In that *modicum* we can rejoyce, though we do not wallow in thoſe affluent Delights, which the ſenſual Beaſts of the Earth batten and rot in. A ſufficiency of ſuitable Comforts fills our Appetite; Convenience being the eſſential Property, if not Eſſence of Goodneſs. When every thing hits us, lies pat, and even,

and

and easie upon our Hearts, in a pleasing agreeableness, we do not envy Crowns and Scepters. But if we have all and enough to spare, can never see through our Enjoyments, be full and abound not only in opinion, and with respect to the content of our Minds, but in the reality of the thing; we then begin to sing a *requiem* to our Souls, and sit down under the shadow of these Gourds with delight. And have we not a sufficiency, nay a redundancy, an infiniteness of all Necessaries and Agreeables in God's Love and Goodness? of which *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive* the fulness, the glory, the sweetness, the amiableness, the suitableness, the comfortableness. Thy Mansion House here is the Bosom of Love, repleniſhed with a confluence of all desirable Satisfactions; thy Garden the Paradise of God; thy Demesne, the Celestial *Canaan*; thy Revenues and Incomes, the unperishing Treasures of Divine Goodness, and Grace, and Glory, the unsearchable Riches of Christ.

But be a Man's Comforts never so sweet, if there be an equal mixture of sowre, he writes *Caput* upon the front of all his Enjoyments. And ordinarily a drachm of Gall will spoil an ounce of Honey; one Cross embitter a thousand Comforts. If now I be secure either that the Evils will be as the *morning Cloud, and early Dew*, or that I shall be no loser, not be rob'd of the least real satisfaction, but gain equivalent, if I have a reserve of other, better, sweeter Joys, and Blessings which will countervail my Sufferings; or if when the Tempest lies hard upon me I be certain of a safe retiring Place, and Refuge where I am out of danger; or if I have weathered out the Storm, that the worst is past, and a prospect

is

is given me, of so great an advantage, so happy an issue as will compensate the trouble; if all along I find by experience that 'tis for the best, and if I had been to carve for my self, and spin the thread of my own Fortune, I could not have pitch'd upon any thing so eligible as what is dispens'd to me without my choice, by the Wisdom and provident Goodness of Heaven; every of these things singly yields me a plentiful harvest of quiet in my Mind, and contentedness with my Condition; much more joyntly altogether. And has not every good Soul the amplest security, that it shall be blest with all this, and much more, in and through the benignity and Love of God? Have we not ground to believe that Love will not permit any evil to interrupt our Joys, except there be need? *That Love will cut it short in Righteousness, it shall be but for a moment, a little moment? Love being afflicted in all our Afflictions,* will not long torment it self. What Love promises, Power can command. In that very small moment of continuance, I am secure, that Love will not suffer my Miseries and Disquiets, to commit a rape upon my best satisfactions in it self: and that I shall lose no Metal, but only Dross, which 'tis my happiness to do, and even that loss (if my gain of Refinement and Purity deserve that Name) will be recompenced to the full, in those infinitely better things laid up in store for me, in the plenitude and all-sufficiency of unboundable Goodness in the Divine Nature and Persons. But be the Calamity as great and malignant as is imaginable, I have *a Rock higher than I,* where I may be safe, above the reach of ruin. For having past the pangs of the New Birth, the worst is past, both in respect of Pain and Danger, Sorrow and

Fear,

Fear. Though my Veſſel, the Body, may be broken; yet ſhall I certainly land in ſafety upon the bleſſed ſhore of Eternity, with all my real Riches and Comforts environing me. I am I hope in a ſound bottom indeed; Chriſt carries me in his Body, his Bowels; that's the Ship wherein I am wafted over the Tempeſtuous Ocean of Miſeries in this World, to the fair Havens of everlaſting Loves, Joys, and Reſt. The foreknowledge whereof, together with my preſent ſenſe of profit in my Soul, ſtrength againſt Sin, reſolution for God, evidence and experience of his Preſence, Support, Influence, Grace, the affectionate workings of his Heart in Love, Care, Kindneſs, flowing over all the banks in multitudes of unmerited Bleſſings in Temporals, but eſpecially in Celeſtials: Theſe ſweeten all my Sorrows and eaſe my burthened Spirit, that I cannot but acknowledge the Proviſions of Infinite Wiſdom, incomprehenſibly more eligible and beneficial than the utmoſt that could ever enter into my utmoſt raiſed Imaginations.

But if the pinch come yet a little nearer, that though accommodated with an affluence of all terreſtrial Contentments without, yet a dangerous Diſeaſe preys upon my Vitals, or the Arrows of the Almighty gall, wound, and ſmart in my Conſcience, that I am deſtitute of the Bleſſings of a ſound Mind, in a ſound Body, the enjoyment whereof would add an Emphaſis, to all external Comforts, a living, a healthful Man and Mind having no reaſon to complain and be ſad. But now Love is Life and Health and all things: The breath of thy Noſtrils, the length of thy Days and Delights, but the ſhortner of thy Pains and Sorrows. *Lam.* 3.39. *Neh.* 2. 2.

*Doſt*

*Psal.* 34. 12, 13, 14, 15. *Doſt thou keep thy Tongue from evil, and thy Lips from ſpeaking guile, depart from evil and do good, ſeek Peace and purſue it? Then are the Eyes of the Lord upon thee, and his Ears open to thy cry, thou ſhalt enjoy deſired Life, and beloved Days, that thou mayſt ſee Good, yea the Goodneſs of the Lord in the Land of the Living; thou ſhalt not die but live and declare the Works of the Lord.* How can that Body or Soul be ſick that's embrac'd in the healing Boſom of the great Phyſician? *Forgiveneſs of Sin is a Medicine for every Malady*, Iſa. 32. 24. *If he whom Chriſt loves be ſick, 'tis not unto Death, but for the Glory of God*, Joh 11. 3, 4. *Love will looſe the Pains of Death. Thou haſt loved me from the Pit of Corruption, for thou haſt caſt all my Sins behind thy Back*, Iſa. 38. 17. God bears not a grudge againſt thoſe he loves. 'Tis Loves property to chaſtize, none of its Office to impute guilt, and puniſh, but to cover a multitude of Sins, 1 *Pet.* 4. 8. An infallible Cure or Remedy for Diſtempers of Body and Soul, ſupports a ſinking Spirit, revives a diſconſolate Heart, encourages a fainting Hope, alleviates the grievouſneſs of Pains, diſcuſſes Trouble and Fear: and under the Wings of the *Son of Righteouſneſs* we have it, his Power and Skill are not leſſened, nor his Bowels and Love diminiſhed, by his tranſlation into a ſtate of immutable Perfection. Here's an Antidote againſt every Plague and Poyſon, a Salve for every Sore, not like Humane, only of a finite limited Vertue, but of infinite and univerſal Efficacy. Oh wonderful *Love*! thou art the only παντοφάρμακον, the true *Elixir of Gold*, which is alway at hand, becauſe Omnipreſent; can never fail, becauſe Omnipotent; never decay and loſe

any

any vertue, because Eternal. Who can do less than ever dwell upon thee, who hopes for ever to dwell in thee, 1 *Joh.* 4. 16.

If a Man be alway bending his Mind to pore upon his Troubles, they sink him; but if any admirable strange thing, if any thing of singular pleasure, and delight, present it self, it gives a diversion to our Minds, and putting by our bitter Reflections upon those ingrateful damping Grievances, that swallow up our Thoughts and Joys, makes us forget our Pains and gives us ease, whilst we are taken up with those more powerful Contemplations. And is there not a relief of this Nature in God, in whom every thing is wonderful? He is all Miracle, his Essence, Subsistence, Perfection, Providence; but above all his Goodness, Grace and Love, with the fruits of it; What infinite Beauty? What admirable Fulness? What unconceivable Freeness? What astonishing Descents? What transcendent Varieties? Oh the Riches! the Joys! the Pleasures! the Triumphs! above expectation, Desire, Thought, all freely tendring themselves, and wooing our Minds and Hearts to a serious Consideration, a kind and dutiful Embracement. Oh sweet inviting Magazine of Wonders! how shall I endure to leave thee, who can with no patience endure to think of being left by thee? In thee I am in Heaven, how can I descend from thee, yet 'tis time to give my self the divertisement of a walk in another Paradise.

§. 3. *Justice* it self under the Conduct and Influence of this over-shadowing *Goodness and Love*, though perhaps not sensibly at present, yet really is become the most comfortable of all *Di-*

*vine*

*Remunerative Justice is in reality goodness.*

*vine Attributes*, to a believing Soul, through Jesus Christ; notwithstanding that it is the most terrible, to the impenitent Christless. A Paradox easily made out, thus: That which makes our Mercy and Comfort sure, and necessary, that we cannot miss of enjoying it, is more comfortable, than that which leaves it at liberty, and only renders it possible. When a good thing is in the free dispose of a *Donor*, that he may chuse whether he will bestow it or no, we can have no certainty at all that we shall receive it; no not when we have infallible assurance of his inclination to bestow it: For 'tis still in his own Power, and he may suspend the Gift as he pleases, without any impeach to his Honour. And though it may to us seem Congruous to his goodness to grant it, yet is he not necessarily ty'd to our Laws of Congruity, neither can they impose upon his Freedom, and make his Mercy fatality. God Almighty bears a singular good Will to all his Creatures, especially the reasonable, would not that any perish, 'tis no pleasure to him; but that all Mankind *should come to the knowledge of the Truth, and* (through Repentance and Faith in Christ) *be saved*. This Repentance and Faith are his Gift, which remain in the free disposal of his own good pleasure, to confer upon whom he pleases: therefore the Gift of Repentance stands upon a *Peradventure*; 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. without any injury to *Divine Goodness*, which is not at all the less, though this Blessing be denied to the greatest part of the World, and to all the fallen Angels: For more Goodness and a strong Inclination to Communicate, transfers no right, therefore no wrong is done by the suspence or denial of the Gratuity expected. But

then

then Justice suppoſes a right, and dueneſs of the Bleſſing, and that it cannot be in Righteouſneſs withholden, therefore makes it undoubtedly ſure from him, that cannot poſſibly be unjuſt. Now, though nothing be, or can be due from Juſtice to a Sinner, conſidered as ſuch, but only Indignation and Wrath, on account of the Covenant of Works; yet the Covenant of Grace tranſfers a right to Mercy, upon thoſe that fulfil its Conditions: Therefore the gift of Pardon to the Repentant, is no leſs an Act of Juſtice, than free Goodneſs and Grace; and there the Scripture lays it, with Sanctification alſo. 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. *If we confeſs our Sins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.* Mark firſt [*Faithful*] which reſpects the Promiſe and Covenant, granting aright out of meer good Will and Grace, and then, and not till then, [*Juſt*,] diſtributing what the Covenant and Promiſe had made due, and an Irrevocable Right. Oh rich Comfort! *Pardon and Purification*, and both from Juſtice! What can we expect more to ſatisfie our utmoſt Cravings? Since theſe are Vertually all Spiritual and Cœleſtial Mercies, giving a right to *Peace and Glory*. Oh everlaſting inexhauſtible, mine of the ſweeteſt Joy and Reſt! What is the ſource of all thy Sorrows? Nothing but ſin: This grinds thy Conſcience in pain; this brings all the external Grievances of thy Life. By Nature thou art as bad as Sin and Hell can make thee, though not in the degree, yet in the kind of badneſs, *viz.* Moral Conſcience of forepaſt Wickedneſs, is a Cut-throat to all Comfort. Mens eyes when opened indeed, are more apt to look backward than forward. Upon Reflection, paſt Evils of Sin ſting more ſmartingly, than the Remembrance of

paſt Evils of Suffering can refreſh and ſolace. 'Tis not ſo Comfortable to think that the worſt is paſt in Affliction, as grievous to conſider paſt Evils of Sin, for which the worſt is to come. The pleaſure in acting is infinitely ſhort of the pain in repenting; eſpecially in Hell. A Man would forfeit all the Joys of his Life, upon Condition he had never defiled his Conſcience: as the Devil in the poſſeſſed Woman told the Biſhop of *Cambray*, that he could be willing to ſuffer all imaginable Torments to the Worlds end, ſo he might but then return into Heaven. Nothing more bitter in the Belly, than the Sins that were moſt ſweet in the Mouth: The Digeſtion troubles the Bowels infinitely more, than the Maſtication gratified the Palate.

But why is Sin ſo dreadful? What is it that makes thy formerly pleaſing Tranſgreſſions ſo torturous in the Recognition? Truly this, God knows them, remembers them, is concern'd about them, engaged to animadvert upon them; his *Juſtice and Wrath* will not let them paſs; thou canſt not get through his hands, with thy Luſts about thee, as eaſily as they paſt through thine. Oh this is the ſting of Sin! 'tis a *fearful terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* The unutterable Agonies and Woes of Hell, and the horrible Tempeſt of *Divine Vengeance*, and indignation in everlaſting Burnings, which will be tormenting above all, that any underſtanding, but that of God, can comprehend; the bitter Weepings, Wailings and Gnaſhings of Teeth, without Eaſe, Releaſe, Mitigation, Relief, or End; this intolerable after-clap of Sin, is even to the remembrance and fore-thought, almoſt as Cruciating as it ſelf to the ſenſe and feeling will be confounding.

God's

God's Writing down all our Miſcarriages in his Book, out of which all the Power and Policy in the World can never expunge them; his ſetting even our ſecret Sins, in the light of his Countenance, which makes them infinitely more viſible than the Sun in the Firmament; is a conſideration that ſticks and ſtabs us to the Heart, and Murders all our Comforts at once, and buries us in Horror. Yet now, if there can be any good token found that this Hand-writing is blotted out. If a Man can be aſſured that Iniquity and Tranſgreſſion, ſhall by God be remembred no more, this is the moſt reviving tranſporting Solace in the World. But, how can I have a Teſtimony that God hath thus privileged me? How ſhall I know that he will forgive and forget my wickedneſs, if he do not tell me? Who can ſearch into the bottom of his Counſels, and know his purpoſes and practice in Heaven, if himſelf do not reveal them? And there are but two ways of revealing any ſecret thing, *viz.* by words and by works. Words ſpoken and written; Deeds in Signs. The Holy Scriptures reveal God's general Will to pardon ſome, yet do they not name, but only deſcribe the Perſons, giving their true and lively Moral Character, ſetting down at full ſuch Qualifications, as may be to any Man a clear Evidence, who is, and who is not made happy in this forenſecal Mercy of Juſtification. If an Angel from Heaven ſhould addreſs himſelf to thee, with this Comfortable Meſſage, That thy Iniquities are pardoned: If a *Bath-kol*, a voice in Thunder ſhould name thee, and ſay, Be of good Comfort, thy Sins are forgiven thee, thou could'ſt not be ſecure, that this was not an Illuſion to abuſe thee into Preſumption, if thy inward ſenſe did not re-

port those tokens, on which the Word of God does suspend thy Pardon: But if thou canst but produce these, all the Angels and Voices from Heaven imaginable, though as particular and clear as possible, telling thee thou art unjustified, must be acknowledged, accursed Deceptions, because they Preach another Doctrine, than Christ has done in the Gospel, *Gal.* 1. 8.

Well then, that thou may'st find a good token for good, thou need'st not ascend into Heaven to search the *Archives*, or court Rolls of the upper Bench there, nor turn over the Book of Life in a curious tracing out thy particular name; but having duly informed thy mind, what are the signs of a *Pardoned State*, look within thy Soul and Conscience, and diligently enquire and examine without Partiality, and a bias's selfward, whether the present State, Constitution and Frame of thy heart, be that in reality which is enrolled in the promises of the Book of God, the Scripture, which tender to thee Conditionally, the forgiveness of Sin, produce but those Conditions, let it but appear upon sound Evidence, that will satisfie thy self and the World, and thy Judge; that having truly repented of thy Sin, thou liveſt under the Dominion of *Faith* and a good *Conscience*; and *Justice* it self is obliged to *Faithfulness*, for the granting thee Indemnity and Remission, and the sense thereof in thy own Soul. For if a Man can truly say, that he hath repented, and stands to what he has done, in stedfast Resolutions, never to return to folly, his Reflections upon former Sins will not be torturing, though they may be grieving, because he hath the promise of Mercy and Pardon, *Isa.* 55. 7. *Acts* 3. 19. which Justice it self is obliged to perform: For Conditional

Promi-

Promiſes in themſelves are Diſpenſations of free love, which was not obliged by any neceſſity or Congruouſneſs to offer ſuch Bleſſings upon ſuch terms; yet once made, and the Conditions obſerved, the Donation of the Mercy becomes the intereſt of ſtrict Juſtice and Righteouſneſs. But, although the New Covenant admit of Repentance, which that of Works could not; yet this Condeſcention is only through a Mediator Jeſus Chriſt. If therefore to thy Penitence thou do not ſuperadd Faith in him, neither will thoſe after Thoughts be ſound nor introductive of Peace, becauſe without Chriſt our *Righteouſneſs and Peace* objective and cauſal without us, *Jer.* 23. 6. 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *Mic.* 5. 5. *Eph.* 2. 14. there can be no Pardon and Peace formal within us, *Rom.* 8. 1. and without Faith no Juſtification, no Chriſt, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Joh.* 3. 18, 36. Yet both theſe muſt be evinced to be ſincere and ſound, and thereby be themſelves juſtifiable and juſtified; which nothing can do but the exerciſe of a *Good Conſcience*, *Acts* 24. 16. This alone is to us the ſureſt Evidence, that our Repentance and Faith are unfeigned, and that we deceive not our own Souls. Indeed the baſis of all true bliſs and ſolace is a good Conſcience, in Juſtice and Innocency toward Man, Inoffenſiveneſs and Piety toward God, Moderation and Sobriety in my ſelf; the contrary to theſe and Comfort are incompatible. 'Tis but a colloguing with my Conſcience to my utter Confuſion to tender it Peace, if it be not pure, *Jam.* 3. 17. No Man can be groundedly quiet in Mind if filthy in Heart and Life. If thou be a Devil thou muſt carry thy Hell about thee, viſibly, or under diſguiſe in its ſelf, or its Cauſes. Thou haſt no juſt Right to the ſweets of Religion, if a ſtranger to its Power. A Mans

first Designs for Joy, are, or ought to be laid in Self-survey and Reflection. If he can find nothing of God within, he can take comfort in nothing of God without, but by an unjust Usurpation and Sacrilege. All the goodness of God signifies nothing to an ill Man: But a *Good Conscience* [or heart] is a *continual Feast*, *Prov.* 15. 15. He that finds all right at home, who has no rebuke nor cause thereof from the Domestick Comptroller and Comforter in his Bosom, is happy. Now, there can be no goodness in Conscience but only from God, and as far as in Conjunction with God. God in thy Conscience makes it good; for he is all Goodness, and there neither is, nor can be any except in, and from him. And all the goodness which is in thy Conscience from him, is first from his Faithfulness, acting under his Love in the Covenant, wherein he promises to give a *new heart of Flesh, and Write his Laws in it* by his *Spirit of Promise*, which he engages shall cause us *to walk in his Statutes*, &c. Next and under Faithfulness all the goodness in thy Conscience is from Justice: For the Right that Fidelity gives to Mercy, Justice is obliged to maintain. God must perform his Word, because he cannot deal fraudulently, that is unrighteously. If thou be good and holy, 'tis only because God is Just and Righteous. He cannot pass away a Right by Deed, Hand and Seal, and afterward resume it. If we have thus made a Mercy thine, he will not defraud thee of it. Lastly and under all, Power actually confers upon thee, all that goodness that adorns thy Conscience. Oh sweet Combination and Harmony of Love! in all concurring to create thy Peace! Oh how

טוב לב

*Ezek.* 36, 26, 27. *Jer.* 31. 33.

how valuable is it! that Love must unite so many Perfections, in so strong an Engagement to qualifie thee for it, and then enrich thee with it, and the sense of it. Here's the Glory and Crown of free Grace. Grace is free thus. 1. As nothing but God's free Will and Goodness mov'd him to design so great unmerited Mercies, upon so mean and inconsiderable terms. 2. As nothing but his free Grace, without all desert in us, prevails with him to work the Conditions themselves and terms in us. But now, when free Grace has proceeded thus far, then Pardon, and Holyness, and Peace are not any longer free in this sense, *viz.* reserved wholly still in his Power to withold; but by the Motion and under the Conduct of free Grace, as its Ministers, Fidelity and Justice take up the Administration where free Grace left it: so that God cannot deny these Mercies, his Word being past, because he cannot deny himself, and cease to be faithful and just; that is, to be God. Thus, what is free Grace in the Original, Rise, and whole process mediately; is in the closing and compleating Acts thereof immediately Justice and Righteousness. Thou Repentance and Faith be not claimable upon any account, but mere free Love; yet when this admirable Goodness has conferr'd Repentance and Faith, it makes Pardon, Peace, Comfort and Heaven challengable, even in Justice (though not as merited yet) as Conditionate Mercies. Whence the Apostle speaks roundly, *Heb.* 6. 10. *God is not* UNRIGHTEOUS, *to forget your work and labour of Love.* In some the Gift of the Conditions, Qualifications, Dispositions for Blessings, is only from free Mercy and Grace in God; whence those Conditions in us are called Graces, the name of the Cause Metonymically

mically given to the effect; Grace within us, from Grace without us in God: But the gift of the Blessings and Privileges themselves upon performance of the Condition is really Justice. Our absolute positive State is from Grace, our relative from Righteousness; yet such Justice is also Originally free Grace, because 'tis not a natural Act of Justice but Voluntary. I mean such Justice is not a thing, which God of himself by necessity of Nature was ty'd to, antecedently to the free Engagement of his own Will; but his free Mercy without any other Motive, than its own Generosity and Nobleness of Disposition and Ingenuous Freedom, did pitch upon such a Series of Dispensations in boundless Wisdom and Goodness, that (these Acts of Liberty interposing) Justice must needs be obliged to prosecute the beginnings of Love, and do such things in order to our Happiness, as before those Acts of Grace, it was not ty'd to at all; and this is chiefly done by the Interposition of Faithfulness. An instance will render all more plain, it shall be that which we Discourse of Comfort. Justice of its own Nature is not at all obliged to comfort a Sinner, though Penitent; but contrarily, the natural state of Justice engages it to punish Sin, not only with the Pains of Penitence, but Wrath and Vengeance, although a threatning should never intervene: For I suppose the threats to be in this different from Promises, that the former declare the natural, both right of the Law-giver, and dueness of the Penalty, and desert of the Crime, which the reason and nature of the thing had fixed before, only since the Right was invested in the Law-giver, it was in his Power, upon just and valuable Considerations, to make a Relaxation, or Commutation.

tion. But, Promiſes do not declare, but give a Right, not to the Promiſer, but him to whom the promiſe is made, either abſolutely or upon Condition; whereby things are put out of his own Power, either abſolutely or conditionally. Now therefore, God by his Son has freely made this Declaration, *Matth.* 5. 4. *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.* God cannot utter Falſhood, nor break Promiſe, nor withhold Right; hence 'tis, that the Adminiſtration here falls into the hands of Juſtice, upon the Interpoſal of this free act of Mercy, in making the Promiſe. Threats proceed according to the natural right of the caſe, in the ſubſtance of it, though they may vary from it in Circumſtances, in which the Puniſhment may be alleviated or heightened, at the Diſcretion of the Judge, or Solemnity, Pomp, Grandeur of the Matter and Proceſs. So Promiſes proceed according to the will of the Promiſer, as to the matter or thing promiſed, which he may pitch upon, and chuſe at his own Arbitrement: But, when the Bond is once out of his hands, it may be Sued at the Bar of Juſtice; only he retains a liberty to Circumſtantiate his own grants, when he cannot recede from them in ſubſtance, the Right to which is not inveſted now in him, but the Perſons to whom the Promiſe is made. Comfort then he muſt in Juſtice give, 'tis the Mourners Right, if they be right Mourners. Mercy and Fidelity gave the Right, and Juſtice cannot diſannul it, although it be not a natural, but adventitious Right; and although this Juſtice be not the Original neceſſity of his Nature, but the free Diſpenſation of his Grace. For, *Gen.* 18. 25. *ſhall not the Judge of all the Earth do right.* His Love has made this Juſt, and his Juſtice will give

its

its due to his Love. That Eternal invariable Righteousness, which is a steady fixed Propension, to render and distribute Right in all possible Cases, and give all imaginable dues, is no changling in this Case, where the right and due is not any natural Resultancy from the condition of the Creature, but a mere Condescention of undeserved Grace: Justice may suspend, but cannot overthrow the Right of Mercy, but is obliged to own and observe it, upon account of the Sacrifice, and Merit of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Indeed, this is all the Foundation of a Believers hope in Judgment: For Judgment is a Work of Justice, which distributes Dues, and particularly Rewards and Punishments according to Works. Therefore the Reward of Believers, is attributed to the same Justice that punishes Unbelievers, 2 *Thes.* 1. 4, 5, 6, 7. *We our selves glory in the Churches of God, for your Patience and Faith in all your Persecutions, and Tribulations which ye endure; a manifest token of the Righteous Judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer. Seeing 'tis a Righteous thing with God, to recompence,* 1. *Tribulation to them that trouble you,* 2. *and rest with us to you who are troubled,* &c. This, as well as the other is [δικαιον] Just. 'Tis the Office of *Justice* to take notice in all its proceedings of *Right and Wrong*; but if the Right approve its reality, 'tis no Work of Justice to take Cognizance how we came by it, whether it be natural Inheritance, or personal Acquisition, whether our own indefeisible Possession, or anothers free Donation, these are things Foreign, and out of the Circuit of Justice. *Right* must carry it, whatever be the Foundation of it, whatever be the Nature of it, whatever Title it proceeds upon:

For

For no Varieties in the Right, alter the Juſtice of the Procedure, nor convert Juſtice into Injuſtice, or any other thing. The very Eſſence and Formal Nature of Juſtice as Diſtributive, conſiſts in diſpenſing Right: Whereever that is, the Act is formally Juſtice, and nothing elſe; although ſome other Vertue may have an antecedent Influence in forming the Right. So here, No Man hath a Natural, Perſonal Right to that everlaſting Reſt, neither do the beſt Services of the moſt perfect Creatures, Angel, Archangel, Cherubim, Seraphim, found a right to it, able in the nature of the thing, to command and neceſſarily overrule ſtrict Juſtice, ſo as 'twould be Injuſtice properly ſo called to withhold or deny it. For Heavenly Glory in its full Latitude (which I underſtand by that Reſt) is a thing boundleſly above the Proportion of any finite Qualities or Operations. Thoſe ever Bleſſed Spirits are doubtleſly incapable of exerting any Acts, that in Arithmetical Proportion, can be as conſiderable and valuable as the Reciprocal Actings of the Deity, that are return'd upon them. For inſtance, thoſe flaming Ardours of Love in Seraphims, which denominate them, cannot in the Eſtimate of Reaſon and Juſtice be conceiv'd equally valuable, with thoſe reactions of Love in the Deity to them. Certainly God loves them better, than they can poſſibly love him; and his Love rays out to them in infinite more Varieties, than theirs can to him, and the leaſt degree of his Love, is more honourable and worthy, than the higheſt of theirs: So that in Commutative Juſtice, they cannot expect his, for theirs; eſpecially ſince theirs is his due, and the Payment of a Debt cannot make the Creditor a Debtor. I have a Conceit, but will not

impoſe

impose it, that the Devils sin was not an aspiring to a Coæquality or Superiority to his *Creator*, which his Innocent, nay even Corrupt Understanding, could not but represent as impossible, impracticable, therefore not designable. But rather a challenge and expectation of those Honours from his Maker, as due in Commutative Justice, to the Excellencies and Actions which he admired in himself, and would have had his Inferiours to adore. Whence in that Kingdom of the Beast, which he established and upholds, this is, or has been a principal Pillar, though now painted over a new; and is indeed the Universal Sentiment of all, in whose disobedient hearts he retains the Dominion, which he usurpt upon the *Fall*. Even good Souls have a difficult Work to disengage themselves from it. However 'tis madness to conceit, that the imperfect Duties or Graces of the lapsed Sons of *Adam*, can stand in a Parity with Celestial Recompences: Nay, the Proportion cannot amount to the heighth of that call'd Geometrical, proper to distributive Justice, which consists in a likeness of Reason. For, can there be any comparison betwixt finite and infinite, imperfect and perfect, temporal and eternal? Can any say, as the Work to the Wage, so is Duty to Heaven. The Right then here stands upon another bottom, than the reason of the thing, and that is the free investiture and gift of Sovereign Love and Mercy, by a voluntary Grant and Covenant. 'Tis not common Soccage, but Copy hold only.

Yet on the other hand, Hell and Sin stand more in a Parity, or equal Proportion. There is full as much evil in the Sin, as in the Punishment, though not as much good in the Duty as in the Reward. The demerit of Sin is unlimitable; the Treasures

of

of Wrath and Woe comprehended in it, are inexhauſtible; therefore eternal. 'Tis juſt then to recompence Tribulation to the wicked, becauſe their Works merit it. Juſt to recompence Reſt to the godly; not becauſe their Works merit it, but becauſe free Grace hath promiſed it. *Neh.* 9. 8. *And haſt performed thy Words, for thou art Righteous.* God cannot be juſt to the Wicked, if he reward not their Works, he cannot be juſt to himſelf, to his own Word and Covenant, if he reward not the Works he hath wrought in the Righteous. Now even Troubles and Afflictions are leſs grievous, if recompence may be hoped for, upon good and ſure Grounds. If our Miſeries become Antidotes to greater Miſeries, it encourages our Patience; if they Work out greater Mercies, it increaſes our Courage, and ſo our Comfort. The gain ſweetens the pain, and we are not ſo much offended with our Croſſes, as pleaſed with the Compenſation. The World is as a Lottery, for a while we muſt draw nothing but Blanks, or what will more grievouſly vex, diſquiet, or torment us; but the laſt caſt will pay for all, to our fulleſt Contentation, if we belong to God's Election. *For this light Affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,* 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. The happineſs of the recompence of Reward, is a thing of ſo tranſcendent Nature, that even the ſerious Thoughts of it may entertain us with more abundant Joy, than there can be Grief in the feeling it ſelf, of the bittereſt Sufferings. The Antepaſts or Foretaſts of Heaven, are incomparably a greater delight than the very ſenſe of Miſery can be a Torment: Therefore ſure theſe exceeding glorious Riches of Cœleſtial Satisfactions, will be an all-ſufficient

Requi-

Requital for all the labour of *Love*, the patience of *Hope*, and work of *Faith*, that we exert in this Semibrief moment of our transitory Life. And it is no small Comfort to consider, that the Fidelity of God has made these Gratuities Justice, by making them the subject Matter of so many gracious Promises; that what otherwise was mere liberty, is now necessity; and God by vertue of these his Bonds, is become a Debtor to God. Oh rich Treasury of strong Consolations! God's grace having so ordered it, not only that he may, but that he must give the penitently troubled Soul, in his own way and time, the sweetest Peace, Comfort and Rest. It may indeed be delay'd, but never can be finally deny'd; and this we owe chiefly to the Justice of God, his sweetest Perfection, through Christ, and the Covenant, to an humbled Soul.

But there are also external Administrations of Justice, which are of a refreshing consideration, and such did the *Psalmist* reflect upon, and solace himself withal, Vers. 1, 2, 15, 23. *Vindictive Justice* is a notable relief to the Oppressed, and the sweetness of Revenge a potent *Cordial*. To see those suffer from whom we suffer, and the Wicked fall into the trap and snare they lay for us, does not a little glad us; especially if it be done by another hand than our own, that we are secure no guilt (therefore no ground of greater trouble) can cleave to us, in the requital of those Evils, which they contract Guilt by inflicting upon us. Therefore *David* Blesses God for preventing his avenging himself with his own hand, 1 *Sam.* 25, 39. But, is there an avenger like God? Who not only can and will vindicate his Peoples repute, from the scandal and reproach

of

of the Malevolent, but revenge their wrong upon the ſturdieſt and ſtouteſt, that ſtrengthen themſelves in the Mountains of prey. For, he is engaged thereto, both by nature, as the God of Revenges, Verſ. 1. and by Office as Judge of the Earth, Verſ. 2. and alſo by Covenant and Promiſe, *Deut.* 32. 35, 36, 43. *Rom.* 12. 19. *Vengeance* is mine: *I will repay ſaith the Lord.* He will proſecute the injurious with a vindictive hand; and this is no ſmall Comfort, to ſee a perfection in God throughly engaged, and active to plead our cauſe againſt the wrongs of Men, when their heighth and power procure for them indemnity, that to ſeek, or even think to regain our right is formidable. Hence we muſt not, cannot avenge our ſelves; nor is it fit we ſhould. We are not wiſe and good, and juſt enough to be entruſted with a matter of ſuch moment, as Judgment in our own cauſe. Where we feel hard hands, we know not hearts, therefore cannot fathom the deep abyſs of malignity therein, nor conſequently meaſure out, and proportion our Puniſhments to Crimes in their full or right Dimenſions, but muſt be conſtrain'd to leave ſomething to God; and why not all? We ſhall be prone to act our own Paſſions, rather than execute Juſtice, and by over-doing out of ſelf-reſpects, or under-doing with reſpect to Perſons; expoſe our ſelves to the revenges of Heaven, which needs not our wrath or wrong, to work its Righteouſneſs, nor will over-look our miſcarriages without due Animadverſion. But, if we commit all to him that Judges righteouſly, we ſhall have right our ſelves, and do no injury to others. And it will *be no grief, ſtaggering, ſtumbling, or offence of heart to us, that we revenge not our ſelves*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 31. (which implies

implies how much that might trouble us) but a Satisfaction and Comfort, that it lies in his hands, who both can, and will do it, and time it for the beſt, *Luk.* 18. 7, 8. 'Tis the fate of Innocency to have the weakeſt viſible intereſt on Earth. *The Wicked walk on every ſide:* Their Numbers, and Powers, and Policies, and Malice combine againſt Holineſs, and for the moſt part oppreſs it, *Eccleſ.* 4. 1. and 8. 14. and 5. 8. but yet it ſhall riſe when they fall, be glorified when they are condemned; and though the guiltleſs, oppreſſed, meet with no comfort or Comforter on Earth; they have both in Faith and Hope, and may rejoyce and triumph, in proſpect of the Day of the *Lord*, which will both right and recompence the wronged, beyond their utmoſt Imaginations; *they ſhall be comforted* over all the Evils they have ſuffered, while *the other are tormented.* Thus does Juſtice adminiſter Comforts, in reverſion to the outwardly afflicted, by the injuſtice of Men, and in poſſeſſion to the inwardly Wounded, by the mixt actings of the Mercy and Juſtice of God. Thus are all Comforts, as products of Love or Righteouſneſs, the fruits of gratuity, liberty, or neceſſity in God.

§. 4. The *Omnipotence* of *God*, as Executor to his Mercy and Goodneſs, Executioner to his Vengeance and Juſtice, does not carry an aſpect of Terror, but comfort to a Holy Soul. Even out of this Eater comes their Meat, and out of this ſtrong ſweetneſs. 'Tis able, and the Perfections upon whoſe errand it goes, engage it to fetch our Comforts out of, even their contraries, and convert our Corroſives into Cordials; much more to derive and deduce them out of their Cauſes, out of all their Poſſibilities. This helping hand,

was

was one of the *Psalmist*'s encouraging Supports, and gave no little ease to his Heart, Vers. 17, 21. With what an undauntable courage did *Achilles* adventure himself into all perils, in confidence of his case-hardned impenetrable Armour; the assurance that he was out of danger, that no Weapon could make a breach upon his Vitals, was the strongest support to his Magnanimous Heart. But, What are Brass and Steel and Adamant, to the impregnable Defences we enjoy in God? Our Buckler and Shield, *Psal.* 18. 2, 30. *Gen.* 15. 1. *Deut.* 33. 29. *Prov.* 2. 7. *Psal.* 28. 7. and 33. 20. and 91. 4. and 115. 9. and 47. 9. and 84. 11. and 144. 2. *Prov.* 30. 5. *Psal.* 3. 3. *A Shield about me*; therefore Vers. 6. *I will not be afraid of Ten thousand of People, that have set themselves against me round about:* And here, Vers. 22. *The Lord is my defence.* Here's a Security unparaliell'd, Armour indeed unpeirceable. The Body of Christ is truly invulnerable: *No Weapon formed against it shall prosper*, Isa. 54. 17. Nothing can reduce it into the State of Mortality. *The Gates of Hell cannot prevail against it*, Matth. 16. 18. nor against the meanest Member thereof, because *built upon the Rock. If Christ dwell in thy heart by Faith, and thou in him by Love*, Men may rage and Devils storm against thee, but the Rock cannot shrink under thee. The Ship cannot sink that carries Christ within the hope of Glory. The Covenant is inexpugnable, Grace inextinguishable, God's Love unchangeable, his purposes irreversible. Thou art unconquerable because God is. Forsake not this thy Defence, be not a Traytor to thy self, and nothing can hurt thee; nothing can wrest thee out of an Omnipotent hand, and whilst in it nothing can ruine thee, though Fury and Ma-

lice may kill thee; yet it does not damage thee, it does but only render thy happineſs immutable, it does but only bring thee back to the felicity thou loſt, reinſtate thee in Paradiſe and Innocency, nay, advance thee above it, in Impeccability and Immortality. And, to what more can the loftieſt Ambition of Humane Nature aſpire? To be free'd from all Evil, and enjoy all good, is the ſubſtance of that Felicity, which the moſt enlarged Appetite pants after. And the Omnipotence of God is all things real and poſſible. There cannot be a created deſire commenſurate to its ability to ſecure us, or ſatisfie us. It is a proper and all-ſufficient remedy, againſt the Diſconſolateneſs, which may ariſe in our Hearts, through two of theſe kinds of troubles, in our Thoughts, which I inſtanc'd before, *viz.* the dreadful and deſpairing. Nothing can poſſibly be ſo formidable, as to be capable of being a match for Almightineſs; nor can there be the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon to deſpair of any thing, if infinite Power undertake it. To be ſafe from fear of Evil, is a wonderful Satisfaction. Danger of all kinds muſt be removed, or we are not ſafe; the fear of all remov'd, or we do not think our ſelves ſafe, and the conceit does torture as much as the thing, which diſquiets no further than as apprehended; and the foreſence ſometimes, becomes more grievous than the feeling. But, where can there be ſafety, if not in an Omnipotent hand? Where without it? *He is the Rock of my refuge*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, Verſ. 22. *The Name of the Lord, is a ſtrong Tower, the Righteous runneth to it, and is ſafe*, Prov. 18. 10. and 29. 25. and 21. 31. *Pſal.* 4. 8. & 12. 5. *Infiniteneſs* is an impregnable Fortreſs, *Pſal.* 18. 2. Here have we the comfort of being above the reach

of

of Malice, in a quiet and ſecure *Sanctuary*. Build thy Tabernacle here, and nothing can endanger thee; make ſure of an intereſt in this, and thou haſt no reaſon to be afraid.

But if thy Fears be not blown over, yet a ſolid Hope may waft thee into Paradiſe. This is a thing that in the greateſt hazard will buoy up a ſinking Heart, and the more grounded our Hope, the more refreſhing. Cut the Cable and looſe this Security and we float a drift without Card or Compaſs, in a bottomleſs Gulf of Miſery. Nothing ſo deadly as Deſpair. 'Tis the utter wrack and ruin of all our Joy. But if we have good reaſon to expect liberation from an unſupportable Evil, or to wait for the communication of a ſatisfying Good, or of the continuance of its Enjoyment, ſo that a ſufficient compenſation will be made us in this, for the hurt we received by the former; or if the evil invading us cut off our hopes of preſent recompence; yet if we be certain of a competency of ſupport and ſuccour, or that we ſhall not feel it in the full amplitude of its malignity, but with abatement and mitigation, that it ſhall only have a ſhort being, but no biding and reſt upon us, that we ſhall ſee through it, we are leſs ſolicitous in our Minds, and herein feel no little relief. Now what a ſafe ground have our Hopes to anchor upon in God's Almightineſs. Here's all Hope, nought to be deſpair'd of. What is there not to be had in boundleſs Perfection? What may not be hoped for from omnipotent Goodneſs? Can there be any capacity in a finite Being, to which infiniteneſs cannot extend? Can there be a rational expectation in a limited Nature, to which unlimited Grace will not accommodate it ſelf. The unfathomable excellency of

God declares him all-sufficient to answer thy expectance to the full, and his free gracious Communicativeness and Promise, render all thy hopes from him rational. Thou canst not desire, much less expect, more than God can give, and he is willing to grant more than thou canst hope for. Nothing in thee can be the measure of his unmeasurable Power and Bounty, in dispensing whatever may be for thy good, and 'tis not rational Hope, which is not guided by this discretion, to look for nothing but what is good in it self or to us. For evil is not appetible, and what is not the object of Desire, cannot be of Hope, but Fear. Now the Judge of what is Good or Evil in it self, or to us, is not our Fancy, or Appetite, or Lust; but the unbiassable Wisdom of God.

We must therefore have recourse to that powerful Hand, which is the *Agent* and *Factor* for such unconceivable Wisdom and Grace; and what cannot that do in our troubled Hearts, which both in Heaven and Earth can do all things, exceeding abundantly *above all that we ask and think*, *Eph.* 3. 20. It can both prepare us for Comfort, by conquering our enmity against it, indisposition for it, unsuitableness to it, and by creating those Qualifications and Conditions, which are prerequisite to our enjoyment of it; and also prepare it for us, and apply it. Is thy state so bad that thou canst not be duly comforted? Almightiness can change it by regenerating thee, *Eph.* 1. 19, 20. with 2. 1. And supply out of the foregoing Verse, [ *that ye may know* ] *what is the exceeding greatness of his Power to us ward who believe, according to* [ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος ] *the inworking of the might of his Power, which he wrought in Christ, raising him from the Dead,*——

*and*

*and you who were dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins.* For as the Learned obſerve, this is the plain and evident coherence; what interpoſes, is to be included in a Parentheſis. Is thy Heart ſo ſtubborn, ſullen or over-whelmed with Anguiſh, or any other Paſſion, that *Rachel*-like thou wilt not be Comforted? even this his Power can ſubdue and bow into a ſpontaneous forwardneſs to accept his gracious offers. Art thou ſo debaſed and vile in thine own Eyes, that thou dareſt not preſume to be Comforted? Omnipotence can and will be the inſtrument of Goodneſs and Fidelity, to create in thee an humble confidence in receiving and applying it, as thy peculiarly deſign'd Portion, for which thou art under an immediate preparation. The Tempter is not ſo able to moleſt as thy Redeemer to pacifie thy Conſcience, and becauſe he is more able he is more willing alſo. *The liberty to act, in acting, being proportion'd to the potency of the rational Agent.* What we can beſt do, we moſt readily, freely and cheerfully do. Every thing that can be congruouſly done, is not only poſſible, but facil, eaſie to Omnipotency. He made a World with a Word, *Gen.* 1. By a Word ſuſtains it, 2 *Pet.* 3, 7. And the mere ſuſpence of that Word will deſtroy it, as follows thence by neceſſary conſequence; *For if by that Word they be reſerved in ſtore for the Fire of that day*, it follows, that without it they cannot be reſerved. The effect muſt needs be remov'd, with its immediate continuing cauſe; they cannot be kept and reſerv'd without a Keeper and Reſerver, continuing his influence for that end, as the Light cannot ſubſiſt if the Sun, Moon and Stars be taken away. This Word of Power which upholds all things, *Heb.* 1. 2. is engaged for the ſuſtentation

of troubled Hearts, *Pſal.* 55. 22. *For the bruiſing Satan* (the great troubler of Souls) *under our feet*, *Rom.* 16. 20. which is ſpoken, I conceive, with relation to the Devils diſcomforting Power: My ground is the title given to him who effects this, *viz. The God of Peace.* The Devil's power to diſcompoſe and diſeaſe us, cannot equal God's power to heal with Peace; which therefore, and becauſe 'tis produced out of nothing in us is ſtiled a *Creation*, *Iſa.* 57. 19. *I create the fruit of the Lips*, *Peace*, *Peace to him that is far off*, (the Gentile) *and to him that is near* (the Jew) *ſaith the Lord*, *and I will heal him.* What the end of his creating Peace was, he had told in the foregoing Verſe 18. *viz. to Comfort him. I have ſeen his ways*, (*Covetouſneſs going frowardly in the way of his own Heart*, ver. 17.) *and will heal him*, *I will lead him alſo*, *and reſtore Comforts to him and his Mourners.* And who is this I, that undertakes all this? You may be reſolv'd herein by *ver.* 15. *'Tis the high and lofty one that inhabits Eternity*, *whoſe name is Holy*, *who dwells in the high and holy Place*, &c. Words importing the moſt Majeſtick Soveraign Power. Kings have the Power of Peace and War. The Creation of Peace is an Act of God's Supreme Majeſty, as well as tender Mercy; ſpeaks the height of his Power as fully as the depth of his Love; whence *Elihu* in *Job* 34. 29. *When he maketh quietneſs*, *who then can* (*condemn*, ſo all Tranſlations, *Chald. Greek, Lat.* &c. *or*) *make trouble*; *and when he hideth his Face*, *who then can behold him*, *whether it be done* [ עַל ] *upon a Nation*, *or upon a Man only*: [*againſt*] is not ſo ordinary a ſignification of the Word, not doth ſo well ſuite both the oppoſite parts of the foregoing Clauſe of the Verſe, which it reſpects in common. If God

thus

thus give Reſt and Quiet, and thereby Peace and Comfort, what Power can controll him, and deſtroy his Work? ſurely none. And why? the reaſon is to be deduced from his Almightineſs. All the Malignancy and Enmity of Earth and Hell, though in a confederacy of united Virulence, Policy, Power, and Violence, indeavouring to make a breach in, or of that ſecure Peace, wherewith a *Good Conſcience*, as a Brazen Wall, doth guard, fortifie and ſurround a true Servant of God, by a Commiſſion deriv'd from Heaven, will but be like the vain attempts of the impotent Waves againſt a *Rock*, which inſtead of overturning it only daſh themſelves in pieces.

Without the interpoſure of Omnipotence, the Comfort of ſinful Man would be impoſſible, in that order of Government which Divine Wiſdom hath pitch'd upon, as moſt congruous for his Salvation. For ſuppoſing Sin, and God's purpoſe not to permit all Mankind to periſh everlaſtingly, under that Juſtice, into the Hands whereof the adminiſtration of his Kingdom did neceſſarily fall, upon the Apoſtacy of Man; and ſuppoſing God's determination, to uphold the honour of his Juſtice and Government in pardoning none but upon Conſideration, and in virtue of a ſatisfaction given to Juſtice; I affirm, 1. That ſatisfaction could not poſſibly be made for the injury done to God by Sin, except only by Omnipotency. For Death being threatned for Sin, the threatning in the ſubſtance of it muſt be executed, or both Juſtice and Fidelity violated. For ſince in the nature of the thing ſome Puniſhment cannot but be due for ſo high an affront to the Divine Authority and Regiment, and ſince the Commination had determin'd and expreſt the

kind of Punishment in substance to be Death with an *Emphasis:* How could the Deity be just in his Word, or his Deed, had all been wholly wav'd? Therefore the Satisfaction given must be by suffering the Penalty to the full, in its substance. The Threatning doth not express any thing concerning the greatness, extensive, or intensive of the Punishment, only that it be proportionable to the Crime Justice requires. The Crime is vertually infinite. The Condition of the Creature will not admit of a Punishment intensively infinite. Therefore the Death threatned can only be extensively infinite, that is Eternal. But an eternal duration that has a beginning is not actually infinite, vertually therefore. The Sin then being vertually infinite, the Punishment proportion'd and threatned must be vertually infinite also, *i. e.* as infinite as the state of the Creature was capable to admit. If now this, *viz.* an *Æviternal Death*, be inflicted in kind, because an end of it is impossible, there could not possibly be any Satisfaction, any Salvation. Satisfaction therefore must be in another kind of vertually infinite suffering, *viz.* that intensively so. And 'tis very consistent with Justice to admit this Commutation, since it has its full demand therein, *viz.* a Punishment proportionable to the Fault, *i. e.* vertually infinite. But now nothing short of Omnipotency, or infinite Power can bear, or wrestle thorow a Punishment infinite, or which is Omnipœnal.

2. Neither could any Power less than infinite, raise the Satisfier of Justice from the Death Temporal, which was indispensibly to be undergone by him, and to this 'tis ascribed, *Eph.* 1. 19, 20. to be presently transcribed.

Lastly

Lastly the same Power qualifies for the Fruits of this Satisfaction, in Pardon and Consolation. *Eph.* 1. 19, 20. [ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος] *the exceeding greatness of his Power to us-ward who believe according to the working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ, raising him from the Dead, and you who were dead in Trespasses*, &c. *Chap.* 2, 1. If this be not Omnipotency, what is? I had rather speak and think as the *Holy Ghost* teaches, than in the profundity of my Reason make my self wiser than him, who inspired the Holy Men of God whose Names these Writings bear. Yet do constantly and confidently affirm that in working these Preparations, (or creating Grace in the Heart, which quickens it) Omnipotence is sufficiently able, so to act under the conduct of Omniscience, as to offer no violence to the faculties of Man at all; but through the influence of a more commanding Light in his Mind, doth lead him in the exercise of a full intemerate and ingenuous liberty through the strait Gate of Regeneration, into *Eternal Rest and Peace.* *Cleared before.*

In short we are sometimes involved in such Soul-troubles so insuperable and intolerable (*Prov.* 18. 14. *A wounded Spirit who can bear*) and such inextricable insupportable straits, exigences and occurrents of Providence; and are reduc'd to such a pinch of extremity, that without a θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, *God in the Mount*, a supernatural Conduct and Power, 'tis impossible to bear up under them, or be delivered from them. These were oft experimented Cases with our *Psalmist*, as appears particularly from *ver.* 17, 18. and as much is insinuated *ver.* 20, 21, 22. and the cruel oppressions of the whole Church, *ver.* 5, 6. evidence that it

was

was not exempted. And where can an over-whelmed Soul, or a wasted desolate Church, groaning under the Fury and Madness of Malice and Violence, in numberless *Legions of Principalities and Powers, and spiritual and carnal Wickednesses in high and low Places, and the Rulers and Sons of the Darkness of the World*, the whole Militia of Satan in Hell, Earth, and their own Hearts? O where can they find defence, refuge and relief, against such an over-match of barbarous Enmity, except in the Almightiness of Heaven? In such distresses we have nothing left to comfort us, beside this Omnipotent Power of God, and it is enough, more than enough, *All-sufficient.*

§. 5. *God's Fidelity and Unchangableness in Word and Deed*, to which I refer, *ver.* 14, 15. *For the Lord will not cast off his People*, &c. This is still a more near ground of Consolation. For other Divine Perfections stand in an indifferency to us, we have no right to take comfort in them, till a *Promise* bring and lay them before us, and engage them for us upon certain terms, which accomplished, all our Mercy is rendred Necessity and Destiny. Yet a Promise that may never be perform'd will administer no certain indefeisible relief, being only as a broken Reed. * Therefore also the comfortableness of the Promises, depends as much upon the invariable Nature of God, as the sweetness of the matter it self, which is tendred in the Promise; and here the *Holy Ghost* leaves it, *Heb.* 6. 16, 17, 18. *An Oath is* [*to Men*] *an end of all strife. Wherein God willing*

* *Hence the promised Mercies are suspended upon Conditions in us, that the whole right of performing them may not stand in the liberty of the Maker, but become Justice and Necessity to him that performs the Condition.*

*willing more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise the immutability of his Counsel, confirm'd it by an Oath; That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lye, we might have strong Consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the Hope set before us.* No state is perfectly comfortable that is changeable for the worse. Be our Contentments never so refreshing, yet the fear to be despoil'd of them will introduce a secret sting and bitterness which will allay their Pleasantness, and so much the more, by how much the sweeter they are, and yet the more, as the parting time still approaches nearer. But when it comes indeed the torment and anguish in their loss is so intolerable, that the satisfactions of our forepast Enjoyment are utterly obliterate and forgot, like the seven Years of Plenty in *Egypt*; and we are ready to wish rather never to have felt them, than so to be deprived of them. *But now the Nature of God not admiting the least variableness or shadow of change,* Jam. 1. 17. *And all the Promises of God, being in Christ, yea and in him Amen,* 2 Cor. 1. 20. *And the Gifts and Calling of God being without Repentance,* Rom. 11. 29. We are secure that our right and possession is indefeisible, and the Comforts that we really partake of in God at any time, are ours for ever. *For he abides faithful, and cannot deny himself,* 2 Tim. 2. 13. Though we believe not, and so the Promise be not fulfill'd to us in particular, because we observe not its condition, yet this will be no impeach to the Fidelity of God, but rather a confirmation of it. For if the Mercy were granted, where the condition on which 'tis suspended is not performed; God would not act according to his Word which is conditional, but would appear to change both his Word, and that whereof it is a

Declaration

Declaration, *viz.* his *Will* and *Purpose*. God's Promises therefore are of an invariable Nature, because he himself is so. Absolute Promises shall undoubtedly be fulfill'd absolutely, Conditional, conditionally, not otherways, because God is unchangeable. Heaven and Earth shall pass away but of his Word not a Jot or Tittle. *For it is for ever seated in Heaven*, Psal. 119. 89. *His Faithfulness therein is to all Generations*, ver. 90. His Promises are a sure never failing Foundation. For even those Promises which in their immediate Nature are conditional to particular Persons; yet to the Church in general are made Absolute, because the Condition it self is promised. *For he that has engaged that the Church shall not be extirpated and destroyed*, no not by all the Malignity and Violence of the Gates of Hell; has oblig'd himself to such a series both of special and common Providences as will infallibly secure it both from internal corrupting Principles, and external destroying Powers. Which yet cannot be done unless the inward Graces be given which entitle to the Promises, as well as those outward defences granted, which may guard against external assailings. And indeed every Promise is made absolute by the greatest Promise, which if it do not this, under the notion of a Covenant, properly so call'd, yet does it as a *Testament*; under which Title the *Holy Ghost* recommends it to us in the *Gospel*, especially in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Those holy dispositions which are required by the Covenant and Promises as terms of Mercy, are bequeathed as Legacies by the Will and Testament of our Redeemer. The Covenant by him is converted into a Testament. That which is διαθήκη καινὴ *Heb.* 9. 15. *The New Testament taking place after the death of the Testator*, ver. 16, 17.

17. is also διαθήκη καινὴ, *Heb.* 8. 8. *A New Covenant.* It gives the Privileges, Pardon, Peace, Comfort, Glory, upon Conditions: But then it gives the Conditions themselves also inconditionally. For he that hath made Repentance, Faith, Love, working Obedience, the Conditions of Forgiveness and Salvation, hath promised also to write his Laws (therefore the Laws requiring those) in the Heart; whence they are styled *Gifts of God: Repentance, Act.* 5. 31. 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. *Faith, Phil.* 1. 29. *Job.* 6. 29. *Love, Gal.* 5. 22. 1 *John* 4. 7. Though all after-Grace be given Conditionally; yet the Condition it self, or the first Grace, must necessarily be given Inconditionally, or we shall make a process *in infinitum*, and never find a First to be the Condition of the Second, *&c.* or we must resolve the first Grace into meer Nature, or admit a work of Man for which he is not at all beholden to the Grace of God, that yet is so acceptable to God, as to have all the exceeding great and precious Promises of the Gospel Covenant suspended upon it.

To every Promise there's an answerable purpose in the Will of God. For if Promises were not expressions of Divine Purposes, they would be mere Mockery and Delusion, *i. e.* Engagements to give what never was intended to be given. As therefore the Decree to pardon and save Men, is Conditional, but the Decree to create in them the Conditions is absolute; so also 'tis in the Promises, which are therefore immutable, because the Decree, the Will, the Nature of God is. Whence Divine Veracity stablishes and fixes our grounds of Comfort, from the rest of God's Perfections, and adds new poyse and weight to the Balance, without which, all our Mercy is only

ly Liberty, and our Expectation nothing but ſtrong Imagination, our Faith Fancy. For what have we to do to hope, that a Majeſty ſo exalted, and eminent, will in a peculiar manner, above the courſe of ordinary Providence, (or indeed in that) concern himſelf about us, till he declare it? And what confidence can we have in any Declarations, if we have no aſſurance of Fidelity in the Revealer? Sinners have nothing in God intereſted about them, but vindictive Juſtice and its ſubſervient Attributes, whilſt they continue under the Firſt Covenant, and reject the terms of Grace. Men may declaim what they will at rovers concerning the merciful Nature, and boundleſs Goodneſs of God to his Creatures; 'tis acknowledged they are unſpeakably Rich and Glorious; but though they be the neceſſity of his Nature, eſſentially conſidered, yet their egreſs and flowing out into tranſient Acts, is Arbitrary and merely Gratuitous. His Nature is all Love, and Kindneſs, and Goodneſs; yet theſe are not the next ground of Hope. Go preach this Doctrine in Hell to the Apoſtate Angels, extol the Mercy of God as high as the higheſt Heavens, Rhetoricate upon it with the Tongue of a Cherubim, through all the Varieties and Flowers of an Invention as large as the Univerſe, as lofty as the Sky; make them believe if you can, that they are under the diſpenſation of Grace, that infinite Bowels will not permit any of his Creation to be finally Miſerable; ſee whether you can mock them into hopes of Salvation, with ſo comfortable an Oration. No, there can be nothing but Deſpair where no interpoſal of God's Faithfulneſs. Goodneſs and Love, be they never ſo unmeaſurable and free, do but only contribute to the height of the Miſery

Misery of those who having forfeited all the excellent Fruits of them, cannot find or expect a return of their Embraces and Blessings in the hand of Veracity. For the remembrance of lost Happiness does but only Torture and Crucifie, with the more grievous and anguishful Reflections, if there can be no retrieval; and none can possibly be secure, that Mercy once forfeited and lost shall again be presented to his choice, and acceptance till Fidelity be engaged, that his Faith and Hope may stand firm upon the bottom of a Promise. But upon the intervention of this Attribute, if there be a bond upon the Truth of God, there's one also upon every other Perfection of God. *Wisdom*, and *Goodness*, and *Justice*, and *Power* and all; even the very Being of God is laid in pawn, and every thing in God must subserve to the interest of Veracity, all concur to observe and accomplish its Obligations, all are responsible for it; since 'tis no more possible that God should be a *Lyar*, than a *Fool*, Wicked, Unrighteous, Impotent, Nothing: Fidelity therefore is in a more special manner every Attribute of God, because every one is under a special voluntary bond, to stand by it, over and above the Natural. For though 'tis true, that there is no real difference in God, but all that is represented to our infirm Faculties, under distinct Notions is in him, one omnifarious, single indivisible Excellency, producing various Effects from whence it has its various Denominations; the one uncompounded Divine Essence, as wisely managing all things, in Himself, Heaven, and Earth, being call'd *Wisdom*; the same undivided Essence as Loving being called *Goodness*; the same also as distributing Right being call'd *Justice*; and as Effecting all

all things call'd *Power*, and immutably engaging in *Promiſe*, *Faithfulneſs*; one and the ſame *Being*, in the moſt perfect ſimplicity of Nature, is all; which Unity of Attributes I call the *Natural Bond*, that binds them; and the Plurality being merely nominal not real, is only inſtanc'd in accommodation and condeſcenſion to our imbecility and ſhallowneſs of Underſtanding; yet to ſublevate the ſame impotency in us, and beget the firmer Confidence and ſtronger Conſolation, the *Holy Ghoſt* does aſſociate Divine Perfections and Actions, throughout all his inſpired Writings, in an Engagement for us. *As thoſe two immutable things*, *Heb.* 6. 17, 18. both which, *viz. Counſel* and *Oath*, being mere ſpontaneous bonds, yet are bottom'd upon and derive their Immutability from ſomething in God that is of Natural Neceſſity, *i. e.* his Unchangeable Nature; but are combin'd in a ſtrict voluntary Union, (I mean depending merely upon the Will of God) to confirm our aſſurance of Mercy. So here, that Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, and Power, which no neceſſity of Nature did oblige to own ſinful Man, with any gracious Condeſcentions, are all by the free act of God's Will, which nothing but mere Grace mov'd him unto, (*viz.* by his *Counſel* and *Oath* the bonds upon his Veracity) ſo immutably engag'd to act in ſubſerviency to his purpoſes of Love, that they cannot be themſelves, if thoſe Counſels obtain not. Thus thoſe *Perfections* which are naturally one in Eſſence, are voluntarily made to be one in Efficience; as they are one in Nature, ſo freely made one in Operation; whilſt by the gratuitous and unneceſſitated Act of God, all are ty'd to a concurrence in obſerving the deſignments and ends of *Faithfulneſs*, this voluntary

Bond

Bond he hath laid upon himself, evidencing *that* to be his free choice, which is the necessity of his Nature; that as 'tis absolutely impossible in it self that God should be a *Lyar*: So there may not be the least imaginable shadow of a reason for us, neither to make him one, by our unbelief, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. But our unbelief may be rendred utterly and eternally inexcusable; nor to make him evil and unloving by our Disconsolateness, but his boundless graciousness under the conduct of his trueness to his Promise, may re-establish our Comfort upon an everlasting Foundation; that as the matter of our Joy and Consolation is treasured up in that inexhaustible Magazine of all delectable Sweetness and Satisfaction, the *Goodness of God*; so his Veracity may be a most certain and infallible means to secure it for us, and ascertain us, that in Gods due time, we shall enter upon the full, and perpetual enjoyment of it.

§. 6. *The Presence of God is a wonderful Comfort.* That he who is all this Good insured to us, is not a God afar off, but at hand, both in a general and special sence; both as a God and as our God. Here you see he is represented as *Hearing* and *Seeing*, *ver.* 9. which necessarily imply *Presence*. For these Powers being attributed to him ἀνθρωποπάθως in a Figure after the manner of Men, who are never admitted in Law, as *Eye* and *Ear* witnesses of any thing, unless present; when we divest them of the Figure, and interpret them θεοπρέπως after the Nature of God, they here import, *That God is Present, as a Witness of all the Cruelties of these savage Butchers of God's Servants.* But whether this will carry it or no, 'tis sure, the special Presence of God does in-

fer the General. For if he be in a peculiar manner *Preſent*, this cannot be in the excluſion of his Eſſence; which is Immenſe, circumſcribed by no place, yet in all. Now this Gracious Preſence is plainly implied in *ver.* 14. *Neither will he forſake his Inheritance.* The Negative infers the Affirmative, *not to forſake is to tarry, to continue preſent with.* Neither is that *ver.* 22. aliene from our purpoſe, *My God is the Rock of my Refuge.* It would be a ſtrange Refuge in which we were not capable of being preſent, and our being preſent *in, and unto, and with God*, does clearly demonſtrate his Preſence with us. The Preſence is mutual. When therefore a good Soul takes Sanctuary in God, under the aſſurance of Propriety in him, this imports the Gracious Preſence of God.

That the Pſalmiſt deriv'd comfortable Conſiderations from hence, to compoſe and allay the *Fluctuations* of his turbulent, unruly Thoughts, I doubt not. And it is a Theme very pregnant, to think, that where-ever I am, I am with God, infinite Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, Power, Faithfulneſs; that *there are more with me than can be againſt me:* Why ſhould not this revive my troubled Heart, under all the Machinations, and Violence of Men and Devils? As it did God's Servants of old, 2 *Chron.* 32. 6, 7, 8. *And he* [Hezekiah] *ſet Captains of War over the People, and gathered them together to him, in the Street of the gate of the City, and ſpake to their Heart, ſaying be ſtrong and couragious, be not afraid nor diſmayed for the King of* Aſſyria, *nor for all the Multitude that is with him, for there be moe with us than with him: With him is an arm of Fleſh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our Battles: And the People leaned themſelves upon the Words of* Hezekiah, *King*

of

*of* Judah. The Comfort of these Words, which was a Stay to their disquieted Minds, did consist in the Assurance he gave of the Presence of God. And what more common in the Scripture, than for God himself immediately, or mediately, by his Prophets, or Messengers, to encourage his Servants unto, or in, any difficult, hazardous, displeasing, terrifying, troublesome Undertaking by this, *I am, or I will be, or God is, or shall be with thee?* But incomparably above all things of this Nature, is that most satisfying Ground of everlasting Consolation, beyond all Miracles, which we have in IMMANUEL. That for the Recovery of Lost Mankind, the Eternal Son of God should descend from the Heighth of his Sanctuary and Throne in Heaven, to become GOD WITH US. The Excellency and Beauty of Heaven. *The Son of Righteousness*, did *Eclipse* and shroud his Transcendent Light and Glory, in the dark shadow of mortal flesh, that in the humility of our Nature, he might do and suffer that for us, (*who had debased our selves even unto Hell*, Isa. 57. 9.) which would be effectually conducible for our Exaltation, to the very *Akme* of Celestial Perfection and Felicity. This, This is the everlasting Wonder and Astonishment of Men and Angels, an *Act of Grace*, and a *Means of Peace*, truly worthy of an infinitely *Glorious God!* 'Tis only in Vertue of this, that sinful Man has any gracious *Presence of God at all. If God had not thus Tabernacled in our Flesh*, dwelt in our Nature, we could have had no dwelling in God, but as in a *Consuming Fire, and Everlasting Burnings*. All the Support we can derive, either from God's *Essential Presence*, or Voluntary, depends intirely, upon the *Hypostatical Union and* *Joh. 1. 14.* Ἐσκήνωσεν.

*Presence, of the Only-begotten, Dearly-beloved of God,* to our Nature. But dismiss we this to further Consideration, in its proper Place, 'twas necessary to mention it here, as the very *Basis* of all our Comfort, in any thing of *God*.

Let a Man be *Paradis'd* in the sweetest refreshing Garden of all Sublunary Delights; yet, Solitude will be an Embitterment to all his other Joys; he that can evermore be alone, is either a *Devil or a God*. The Deity pronounc'd that State Bad, when Man's State was at the Best: - *'Tis not good for Man to be alone*, Gen. 2. 18. No, his own Thoughts would devour him, his Troubles crush him down, and sink his Spirits into Despondency and Confusion. 'Tis no little Solace in Misery it self, to have a Fellow, though it be in Suffering; and an Aggravation, when our Sorrows are unparallell'd. *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, behold and see, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow?* &c. *Lam.* 1. 12. was the Sting of the Church's Misery: But *There hath no Temptation taken you, but such as is common to Man*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. is a singular Comfort, under the most grievous Depressions. Society is an Alleviation of Calamities; our Griefs are not so oppressive, if they be in Consort: Company begets a Harmony in Sorrows, and the Consonancy of their Dolours makes a kind of pleasing Musick in Consent with our own, although no other Interest knit them to us, than Community of Cares and Troubles. But how pleasant is the Society of a Friend, to whom we can ease our Hearts in Adversity, and who, by condoling our Afflictions, and bearing our Burthens, lightens our Crosses, and cheers our fainting Spirits by comfortable Discourses

*Solamen miseris, socios habuisse doloris.*

courſes; whom alſo in all our Proſperity, we can make Partaker of all our Joys, and all in whoſe Comforts we have a common Intereſt, whoſe Good we can rejoyce in, when we ſuffer Evil our ſelves, in the noble Senſuality of reciprocating Kindneſſes. If the accidental Society of any be ſweet, much more this Elective; neither is the Natural and Relative inferiour, eſpecially where the Love is not meer Liberty, but Neceſſity. What an unſpeakable Solace, is the tender pretty Babe, to the Compaſſionate Mother? With what raviſhing Exultations, does ſhe entertain it into her Embraces? How does her Heart leap for Joy, at the very ſight of it? And her Bowels yern over it? And in its Enjoyment, can triumph over all her other Miſadventures and Misfortunes? In general, any thing to which we can let out our hearts, in an entire Affection, adminiſters Satisfaction: The very working of Love, and Commiſeration, ſingularly pleaſes. There's no Solace but in ſomething that delights. *Thy Comforts delight my Soul.* Under Perplexity no Peace. The Heart cannot reſt in what diſpleaſes. What's unlovely is indelectable. Whatever delights, comforts; whether it be in our own Act, or an outward *Object*. Now in incident Company, there's ſomething pleaſing, ſomething (and often much more) diſpleaſing; elſe we embrace it with Friendſhip. In a choice Friend, there's much more pleaſing than diſpleaſing; for we always give ſome Allowance for Humanity. If a Relation, in which blind Love ſees the leaſt ill, yet do in nothing diſpleaſe, 'tis ador'd and made a God. Whatever is mortal, is not without ſome kind of Embitterment. The pureſt Gold has its Alloy, 'tis but ſo many *Caratis* fine; But God is infinite Delectation alway in thy Com-

pany. Thou art altogether incapable of Solitude. He that fills the Universe, *is ever with thee*, Pſ. 139. 18. Yet not accidentally, but ſubſtantially, eſſentially; nor only as a Spectator, but every way concern'd: *Afflicted in all thy Afflictions*, *Iſa.* 63.9. So thou enjoy'ſt that *Solamen*. And if thou haſt elected him for thy Freind, he hath no leſs choſen thee. In his Love mayſt thou rejoice, into his Boſome pour out all thy Griefs, and meet with a Sympathy in his Compaſſionate Heart. *Upon him mayſt thou caſt thy Burthen, who has promiſed to ſuſtain it, and thee*, Pſal. 55. 22. *He cares for thee*, 1 Pet. 5.7. He is tenderly affectioned towards thee, kind to thee, all his is common to thee; when none elſe will or can, a Friend will he be, and a Relation too, the neareſt, the ſweeteſt. To the Natural Relation founded in forming and begetting thee, as a *Faithful Creator*, *Merciful Father*; he hath for thy further Comfort ſuperadded a voluntary tye, in the condition of a Bridegroom, *Mat.* 25. the beginning. But as if Eſpouſals were not firm enough to prevent thy jealouſie of a dereliction, the Conjugal Bond is actually ty'd, *Thy Maker is thy Husband*, *Iſa.* 54. 5. *Rom.* 7. 1,2,3,4. therefore has he obliged himſelf to ever enduring Cohabitation and Love, *with everlaſting Kindneſs will he embrace thee, never leave thee nor forſake thee.*

Neither are his Converſes, and Communication leſs delightful than his Company and Preſence. The Diſcourſe of Friends and Relations, mightily revive a dejected Heart; not only by diverting and putting by ſad diſconſolate thoughts, but in reſpect of their matter as *Hezekiah*'s, before mentioned, to the People of *Jeruſalem*. A kind Friend is a Dove with a Olive-branch in his Mouth, in, and after a deluge of Calamities. Good

Words

Words are as Oyl to the Joynts, Marrow to the Bones, a refreshing, reviving Medicine to a sick oppressed Heart. *As a soft Answer turneth away Wrath*, Prov. 15. 1. So a sweet one turns away Sorrow. *Good Words make the Heart glad, even when heavinesse in it causeth it to stoop*, Prov. 12. 25. *Pleasant Words are as a Honey-comb, sweet to the Soul, and health (Medicine) to the Bones*, Prov. 16. 24. *God is with us to speak to our Hearts, even in a Wilderness State*, Hos. 2. 14. How oft are his Words compared to, and preferred before Honey and Honey-combs? What a revival was it to *Zechariah*, and the *Jews*, when the Lord answered the *Angel-Intercessor* for *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, *with good Words and comfortable Words*, Zech. 1. 13. And with no less exultation did the *Psalmist* say, *Psal.* 85. 8. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak Peace to his People and to his Saints.* Christ himself when present on Earth came *preaching Peace*, *Eph.* 2. 17. His Embassadors by and through him *preach Peace*, *Act.* 10. 36. *He is a good Man*, says *David* of *Ahimaaz*, *and brings good tidings*, 2 *Sam.* 18. 27. Good Words with a good God are glad some indeed. O take pleasure in the Message, more in the Messengers, in the Sender most of all. The inward secret whisperings of the Spirit of Grace and Peace in thy Conscience, the outward publication of Peace by God's Ministers and People, are only in the matter and method of the Scriptures, in which alone, God really speaks Peace. Nothing can comfort but Truth, nothing savingly Comfort but Scripture Truth. All truth is originally from God, Essential Truth is God, the Son of God, *Mat.* 28. *ult.* who is, where-ever he speaks and maks that comforting Truth, which is his Image, efficacious by his Pre-

ſence and Power, ſo that the very Inſtrument of Comfort, does but only delight us relatively to him of whom it is a lively Repreſentation. Thou mayſt be mock'd with a Lye, and bewitch'd into a falſe deceitful Joy, with a Falſhood, but when the Mask is taken off, thy bare Countenance will appear more ſad than at firſt, and thy Comforts more unretrievable. No real Peace, but in the God of Peace, through the Prince of Peace.

Friends and Relations cannot alway be preſent perſonally, with their Company and Conſel to miniſter to our Peace. A Vertual and Vicarious Preſence and Conference, does not a little contribute to our Conſolation, when diſtance of place, renders the other impoſſible; and with what a tranſport of Joy do we receive their Tokens, their Letters, their Writings, with what a πάθος, do we peruſe, and in a manner greedily devour them? How are our Hearts raviſhed with the kind and affectionate Expreſſions, Profeſſions of Remembrance, Reſpect, Love; every Word is a Cordial, we are in an extaſie of Contentation, here as in a Glaſs we behold them, their lively Portraicture is afreſh painted hereby in our Imagination; we hear them, we talk with them, ſolace our ſelves in this Phantaſtical Enjoyment as if it were Real. And why ſhould not our Delights be more tranſcendent in God, who can never be abſent; whoſe Preſence is Subſtance, and not Phantaſtry; and whoſe Tokens of Love, and Letters of Comfort, are not the *Curates* of a *Non-Reſident Being*, nor the Miſſives of a diſtant Superintendency; but the immediate Viſitations of an Overſeeing Care and Love, that naturally minds and regards our higheſt Concerns, and cannot

cannot will not desert us, if we first do not desert him.

How comfortable is good News of any kind, what a reviving to our drooping Hearts? With what passion do we long for it? With what gladness receive it, believe it, bless God for it? The *Gospel of Christ* is better News than the best on Earth: Glad Tidings of the greatest Joy, Peace, Love, and Life. Here mayst thou see the omniform motions of Christ's richest Grace, perceive the compassionate workings of his Bowels, feel the solicitous beatings of his affectionate Heart, in a tender regard of thee; read of the astonishing effects of his wonder-working Power and Goodness, all the Miracles of his Love and Kindness, for thy Good, in Illumination, Sanctification, Justification, Salvation; what he hath done, what he still is doing, what he further will do, to raise thee up, out of the bottomless Pit of unspeakable Misery, to the top and crown of Heavenly Felicity and Glory. Well might the Apostle tell of the *Comfort of the Scripture*, Rom. 15. 4. And *David long for it*, as a means to his solace, *Psal.* 119. 82. This and this alone is the richest Promptuary, fullest Treasury, of all real Soul-satisfactions, hence have we them, or they are but mere Legerdemain, and Illusions. And if the very News of Christ be so sweet, what is he in himself? What is he in Person? None have reason to say of him, as the *Corinthians* of *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 10. *His Letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily Presence is weak.* His is not the presence of a weak contemptible Body, but of an all-powerful Spirit, he that can be Omnipresent, cannot but be Omnipotent. Christ as God is in all, is all, and even as Man full of Vertue, a touch of his very Garments

ments wrought a Miracle of Healing, *Matth.* 9. 20, 21, 22. And if in his Mortal Body there was such Power, what is in his Immortal and Glorified. The Principle I know was Heavenly, though the Vessel Earthly; yet this has lost nothing by its Exaltation to the Throne of God, no nor we neither, for in lieu of that Corporal Presence we enjoy a no less Comfortable Companion, the *Paraclete*, the Holy Comforting Spirit of God, to abide with us, not for a few days, and years, but for ever, *Joh.* 14. 16. So that although our sweetest Relation be gone to Heaven, yet are we not *Orphans*, *ver.* 18. *The Angel of God's Presence*, *Isa.* 63. 19. that saves us comforts us now by *Proxy*, yet is not absent from us, but essentially with us, though Corporeally at a distance from us.

Gods Natural Presence is an immensity of Being, Unconfinable to any Place, Incomprehensible by all Places, Exterminable out of none; and with its fullness filling all in all: So that there is no need of the supplement of any thing to avoid a vacuity, nor is any thing by this Being excluded, that needs a Place. He is in all Space, and beyond all Space, not commensurate with it, but infinite; The Dimetient of all, yet without Measure, and all Corporeal Dimensions; boundlesly greater than all things, comprehending all within the Circle of his Essence, whose *Center is every where*, *Circumference no where*; in all Varieties of Co-present Beings, the same invariable Perfection, no other on Earth than in Heaven; that he can without any alteration in himself, or varying of his place, make Heaven to be any where, every where; therefore the Joys and Comforts of Heaven: For, I reckon that Heaven does not import any difference in

God,

God, but in us; no change in his Being but our Viſion; no new Object, except Chriſt's Fleſh, but new Eyes. Every Spirit (and therefore the Father of Spirits) hath a Power to conceal its Preſence, as well as its Sentiments, from all other Spirits, except God: Yet there's a difference betwixt the Latency of other Spirits, and the Deity. A finite Spirit is hid through the ſuſpence of its Agency *Ad extra*, its acting upon things without it ſelf; ſo the Deity cannot be hid. For, if it wholly ceaſe to act upon any Being, that Being will wholly ceaſe to be, *becauſe all live, move, and have their Being, in and from Him*, Acts 17. 28. which Spirits that ſee not with Eyes, but Intellects cannot but perceive; only 'tis unobſerv'd by Man, whoſe Mind looks through the Apertures of Senſe; which together with it ſelf being darkned through Sin, has but very obſcure and weak Reflections upon that Being, without which he cannot be; 'tis hid to him by a Veil of Fleſh, that envelops his Intellectual Eyes, or elſe he ſhuts, and will not open them to behold this inviſible Nature; which is in reality, more conſpicuous and evident, that is, knowable than any thing in the World whatever. But, the Deities concealment of it ſelf, is with reſpect to ſome more ſpecial Voluntary Operations, which give Teſtimony to his preſence, and demonſtrate the Finger of God; which when ſuſpended he is (and therefore the Comfort of his preſence is) hid from our Eyes. Such are either Miraculous or Gracious: For although every thing in Nature, both in reſpect of his Being and Agency, be a ſufficient Indication of the Exiſtence, Preſence and Efficiency of God; it being impoſſible that any Natural Powers ſhould exert themſelves in a ſuſpence of the Influence

fluence of his; the Concurrence whereof gives them to be what they are, and do what they do: Yet the Deity, sometimes, as being it self the Law of Laws, does in its Actings, vary from, go beside, nay contrary to the common and ordinary Laws of particular *Natures*, and so invert the course and order of things, as to give peculiar evidence of his Presence, and Power by Effects, wonderfull surprizing and astonishing: As the Flood of *Noah*, the first that falls within the Cognizance of History after the Creation. I need not particularize more, the Scripture is full, nor balk that, for all the ingenious attempts of a late Author, to deduce it from Natural Causes, it being demonstrable, that some necessary parts of his Hypothesis, stand in need of the violence of Miracle, or the whole process will stick, and produce nothing.

Yet the Manifestations of the Divine presence, which constitute Heaven, are not in the instances of Power, but Goodness; even as the Discoveries of it in Vindictive Justice form the Miseries of Hell. That Goodness and Justice essentially considered, which make Heaven and Hell are Omnipresent, as being the Divine Nature. But, the Objects of them cannot aspire to an Ubiquity, being of a limited Nature. Should they circulate through all the Regions of *Immensity*, the condition and sense they partake, would present them still with the same unaltered, unalterable Nature of God. Heaven and Hell would be in every place, where Souls so sensed reside; the Discoveries of God importing no change in him, but only in those to whom the Discovery is made: Heaven and Hell not being more the alteration of our State, than the awakening of our sense to discern,

and

and apprehend, and feel that, which before we did not, though before it was the very ſame immutably, and will continue ſo everlaſtingly.

This is the Natural State of Heaven, but the Chriſtian State is ſomewhat more: For the choiceſt, ſweeteſt Diſcoveries of God are therein made, in and through the Mediator God-Man, and in ſpecial to Mankind, through the Manhood of Chriſt; which being of a limited preſence ſettles the Divine Manifeſtations, in a certain limited place, ſufficient to comprehend all Elect Angels and Men. This Divine Preſence we enjoy by Faith here, by Sight hereafter. We have as much of God and Heaven now, as we have of Faith. Divine Manifeſtations are proportioned to our Believings. All the Effects of Divine Goodneſs, in, and upon us, depend upon this Chriſtian Grace, and the degree of them, upon the degree of it. Gain but this, and thou haſt God and all. Nothing can pierce the Heavens, but this Eye. 'Tis the [ὑπόστασις] *ſubſtance of things hoped, for the* [ἔλεγχος] *Evidence* [*Eviction*] *of things not ſeen*, Heb. 11. 1. By it *Moſes ſaw him who is inviſible*, verſ. 27. We never can be without a Heaven, if we have but Faith; it realizes to us that preſence of God, which through Chriſt is the ſole and full ground of all Celeſtial Comforts, Satisfactions and Joys. Pſal. 16 11. *In thy preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at thy Right Hand are pleaſures for evermore. In Heaven thy preſence, Chamber where thou ſit'ſt upon the Throne of Glory, cloathed with Honour and Majeſty as with a Garment*, and diſcovereſt and diſplayeſt the Splendour of thy incomprehenſible Excellency and Perfection: And *at thy Right Hand, where thou haſt ſaid, my Lord ſhould ſit till his Enemies be made his Footſtool*, Pſal. 110.

110. 1. In and through this Jesus, at thy Right hand are pleasures everlasting. But, these are chiefly the Comforts of a Future State; Is there not something at present to stay, and yet inflame the Appetite? Yes, vers. 8. I would always possess that Saturity of Joys, which is before thy face. Therefore, *I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved: Therefore my Heart is gladed, and my Glory* [*Exults*] *rejoyces; my Flesh also inhabits in hope, because thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor give thy merciful* [*or excellent*] *one to see the pit of Corruption, but thou wilt make me to know the path of Lives — He is at my right hand*, and therefore *Gladness and Joy in my Heart and Soul.* But, Oh what is there at *His right Hand*! My Faith setting him now as present before *me*, brings singular Satisfaction and Delight? Oh then, what will sense and sight be, when I shall possess the reality of that which I now believe. The result is, That the presence of God, apprehended by Faith, or Vision, is a thing which comprehends the substance and fulness of all Pleasure, Joy, and Consolation.

Indeed, nothing Comforts, but through some kind of presence: It either is, or is conceived to be and made, indistant by our Cogitations. Humane Infirmity requires something in hand, or in hopes that are as secure, and therefore as good as in hand. Absence of a solacing good, although only imaginary, is tormenting. God cannot but be near every one of us in Essence, and we find him so to be by the effects of his Goodness. Since then he is at our right hand naturally and necessarily, we must voluntarily by Consideration and Faith set him before us, have an Eye upon his presence, fix it in our Minds and Meditations alway:

way: And it will repleniſh us with Spiritual refreſhment and ſolace unſpeakable. For, if *God be with us, and for us, who, or what can be againſt us?* What can trouble or terrifie us? How can that Soul be left in a Hell of diſquiet, that lives in the preſence of God, *i. e.* in Heaven? For, where God is, there's Heaven; he is the all of it, 'tis nothing without him, and his preſence is enough to convert any thing into Heaven. There cannot poſſibly be ſo much Evil in thoſe Infernal Regions of Wickedneſs and Woe, as there is good in the preſence of God. 'Tis an infinite good. There is not ſo much Power in Hell it ſelf, to impreſs the ſenſe of its Evil upon a tormented Soul, as there is in God, to impreſs the Comforts of his preſence upon a gracious Heart. Neither doth the Juſtice of God more enlarge the Capacity of a Man, to ſenſe, and anguiſhfully apprehend and feel the Miſery of his abſence in Hell, than his goodneſs doth widen the Soul's Capacity, to comprehend the felicity of his preſence in Heaven; that I Judge the Saints to be more happy above through their Inheritance in Light, than the Damned are miſerable in outer Darkneſs.

In the Omnipreſence of God we have with us, all Things, all Perfections, all Satisfactions, all that ever God can be, or do, or give; and in his gracious Preſence we have an Ingagement upon him, to be, do, and give all that he can to us; And what can we wiſh, what can we imagine more? God is *All-preſent* by condition of Nature, but graciouſly preſent only by Compact and Covenant, whereby he obliges himſelf to be our God; that is, every thing which he is in himſelf, that we ſhall enjoy the benefit and comfort of all, and every of his Unimitable Soul-ſatisfying and

ſaving

saving Perfections. Now the gracious Presence of God is nothing else but his manifesting himself to be with us, by his Communicating all Covenant Mercies to us: Making us Partakers of a Divine Nature, granting us Pardon, Peace and Comfort; giving us the full use and advantage of all his Attributes, of his Son, of his Spirit; every thing that he is, and hath, which will do us any good for this and another World; satisfying us with his likeness, and filling us with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

When *Esau* therefore came off only with his Lean [יֶשׁ לִי רָב] Gen. 33. 9. *I have much*, well might *Jacob* roundly and triumphantly declare, [יֶשׁ לִי כֹּל] *I have all*, vers. 11. He can want nothing, who possesseth him that hath all things. He is never Poor, or Naked, or Blind, or Wretched, or Miserable, who enjoys the presence of God. He can never be distrest for want of Grace and Holiness, or Pardon, and Peace, and Pleasure, and Joy, and Comfort, who is not without God. For, *Isa.* 57. 15, &c. *Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is holy. I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones. I will restore Comforts*, &c. *I create the fruit of the Lips, Peace, Peace*, &c. A Blessed Denizen indeed: But as he dwells and resides in us, so also do we in him, Psal. 90. 1. *Lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all Generations.* Psal. 91. 1. *He that dwelleth in the secret of the Highest, shall abide in the shadow of the All-sufficient.* Vers. 9, 10. *Because thou hast made the Lord my hope, even the highest thy Habitation: Evil*

*Habet omnia, qui habet habentem omnia.*

*Evil ſhall not befall thee by chance; Plague ſhall not approach thy dwelling.* Make God thy home, and no harm can reach thee: Thy Spiritual home will ſecure thy Civil: That Eternal, thy Temporal: That was thy firſt, and muſt be thy laſt; toward which, 'tis ſtrange that thy Appetite works with no greater Violence. In every Creature there is a natural inſtinct and preſſing deſire, inclining to return to the place of its Birth, to that Country, to thoſe Perſons which had its Maiden Affections. Notwithſtanding the Dominion of reaſon in our ſelves, 'tis no little Gratification to our Fancies, to enjoy a retiring place, and home, where we may refreſh our ſelves after all our wearieſome Labours and Travails. Wherever we are beſide, we are not well, here are our Hearts, our Delights, our Joys; whence we ſay *Proverbially, Home is Home though never ſo homely:* And the Spaniards.

*My Houſe, my Houſe, though thou be ſmall,*
*Thou art to me th' Eſcurial.*

Our Spirit is from God, in his boſom was it born; there is our *Houſe, not made with Hands,* 2 Cor. 5. 1. our Eternal Manſion, and is there not infinitely more agreeableneſs and pleaſingneſs, in him to our Souls, than there can be ſweetneſs and ſuitableneſs in any material Home to our Imaginations. We do not inure our ſelves, *by Love to dwell in God,* 1 Joh. 4. 16. therefore are ſo well content to be abſent from him, to ramble like Vagabonds, chuſing the Life of *Cain* or *Coryat* rather than that of Chriſtians and Saints, whoſe being and bideing, ſhould be ſolely, and electively in God as it is eſſentially and naturally. Oh for ſuch a Diſpoſition of Soul, as would never permit us to be at eaſe, but in ſerious Reflections

upon the presence of God, with which we are ever surrounded whether we will or no: And if we consider this, how can we be any other, than Engarrison'd in Peace, and Joy, and Consolation? Well might the *Psalmist* say, *Thou comfortest me on every side*, Psal. 71. 21. for round about him and within him also, dwelt a Comfort no less than infinite, the Supreme *Majesty*, able, and of Authority to command the presence of all *Good*, and countermand the presence of all *Evil*; and the *Sovereign Mercy* of Heaven, willing, and of sufficient *Love* and *Fidelity*, to make every thing a means of Grace and Peace, and all things (according to his Promise) *Work together for good, to the true Lovers of him, and the called according to his purpose*, Rom. 8. 28.

§. 7. Lastly, *The Eternity of God* is a ground of Comfort, as singular, as it self is incomprehensible. Everlasting Consolation is built upon no other bottom. A perishing Content is in effect none, because it issues in nothing but the greater dissatisfaction. The durableness of our Joy, is its Crown; and since 'tis in the Eternal God, it can be no other in Duration than what he is. Therefore as there *is in God's presence a saturity or fullness of Joy*, in respect of Magnitude and Intensiveness: So at *God's Right Hand pleasures for evermore*, in respect of extent and continuance. And 'tis probable our *Psalmist* might derive some of those Comforts, which did bear *so favourable an Aspect upon his troubled Soul*, as vers. 14. does not obscurely intimate; *For the Lord will not cast off his People, neither will he forsake his inheritance.* The Negative excludes universally, perpetually, *He will never cast off nor forsake*; it also infers the Affirmative, *He will own, and accompany his People, and Inheritance for ever and ever:* Which he is enabled

abled to do only by vertue of his Eternity. Possibly that Expression, verſ. 22. may alſo import ſomething of like nature; *My God is the Rock of my Refuge.* He could not be unacquainted with the Song of *Moſes*, and the Bleſſing he pronounc'd upon the Twelve Tribes, *Deut.* 32. and 33. There are theſe Titles firſt of all given to God. *Rock* in the Song is five times apply'd to the Lord, verſ. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31; twice to Idols, verſ. 31, 37. But, that which I have chiefly in my eye, is Chap. 33. 27. *The Eternal God is thy refuge*; very proper and Emphatical: For 'tis the Eternity of God, that renders him a ſufficient, and compleat Refuge. Notwithſtanding all other Perfections, if he were not the Everlaſting God, our Refuge would finally fail, and be none at all. He is called *The Rock of Ages*, which our Tranſlation renders *Everlaſting Strength*, Iſa. 26. 4. And indeed a *Rock* the moſt indiſſoluble and durable part of the Earth, is an Emblem of perpetuity, *A Rock of Refuge*, is therefore an everlaſting ſecurity and comfort. Nor is it a mean Satisfaction to remember, that as there is a ſufficiency of Ability and good Will in our God; who by Covenant is engaged to put an end to our troubles, and repleniſh us us with the Joys of his Salvation; So he lives for ever to continue them, that they ſhall have no period ſhort of Eternity. He is an ever-overflowing fountain, of *Everlaſting Conſolations*, as they are called, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 16, 17. *Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlaſting Conſolation through Grace: Comfort your Hearts*, &c.

Our Conſolations are Eternal, becauſe God is, for in him they are as in the Well-ſpring, therefore cannot be as *Waters that fail*; as *Jerem.* Ex-

poſtulates, Chap. 15. 18. If they could, *our Wound might be incurable indeed, refuſing to be healed, and our pain perpetual.* But, all this ſhall certainly have an end, becauſe God cannot: This cannot be Eternal, becauſe God is. Whatever is wanting in the durableneſs and ſweetneſs of theſe fluxible, periſhable Enjoyments, which we poſſeſs on Earth; whatever we ſuffer, through the continuance and bitterneſs of our Calamities, is made up, and amends made us abundantly, in the Perennity of all Excellencies in God.

There is in this Attribute, a ſuitable relief in all kinds of Diſtreſſes, outward and inward. All the ſhort liv'd Comforts of this World, have a better Being and Life in the Eternity of God. Thou loſeſt thy Friends and Relations, the ſweeteſt, the beſt; perhaps by the immediate hand of God, as the *Pſalmiſt* here by the violent hands of wicked Men, verſ. 5, 6. The Church of God in ſome places is laid waſte, and the ſtormy Cloud hangs over more, and its implacable reſtleſs Adverries threaten all. The *Innocency* of Chriſt's Lambs is no Protection againſt the *Thrones of Iniquity*, in *Babylon* and Hell, verſ. 20, 21. No, that's the very ground of the Quarrel and Enmity. Conformity to them, Innocency and Iniquity would reconcile them. Do'ſt thou *tremble for the Ark of God?* And is thine own Perſonal Jeopardy or Suffering in Body, Mind, or Eſtate, in any extremity? Be not diſmay'd. *Nubecula eſt cito tranſitura:* The greater the Tempeſt, the ſooner over. Storms may *buff* againſt the Heavens, yet cannot *hurt* them, but only ſpend themſelves: And the *Church* is oft call'd Heaven in the *Apocalypſe*, and its Officers Stars from betwixt our Eyes, and which the moſt raging furious blaſts, may diſpel

diſpel and drive away the Clouds, that Eclipſe and darken them, but ſtill leave thoſe Cœleſtial Lamps more clear and inextinguiſhable, whilſt themſelves are extinct in a moment. The *Dragons Flood* will be ſoon ſwallowed up, and the fury of Men and Devils ſhall quickly faint and melt away, but the Love of God to his choſen, never, never. Iſa. 40. 27, 28. *Why ſayeſt thou, Oh* Jacob *and ſpeakeſt Oh* Iſrael? *My way is hid from the Lord, and my Judgment is paſſed over from my God? Haſt thou not known, haſt thou not heard, that the Everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, there is no ſearching of his underſtanding?* Therefore poſſeſſes he an unfathomable Skill, and Ability to refreſh and revive thee; but this is laid as the Foundation Stone, upon which thou may'ſt rebuild thy decaying hopes, *viz.* that he is the *Everlaſting God.* I therefore return again to that, *Deut.* 33. 26, 27, 28. *There is none like the God of* Jeſhurun, *who rideth upon the Heavens in thy help, and in his Excellency on the Skie. The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are everlaſting Arms, and he ſhall thruſt out the Enemy from before thee, and ſhall ſay, Deſtroy them.* Iſrael *ſhall then dwell in ſafety alone,* &c. *Happy art thou, Oh* Iſrael, *who is like unto thee, Oh People, ſaved by the Lord, the ſhield of thy help, who is the Sword of thy excellency,* &c. Hence in the Titles given to *Chriſt*, *Everlaſting Father*, *and Prince of Peace*, have an immediate Connexion and Dependence, *Iſa.* 9. 6.

If trouble be long, 'tis light, but brief, if grievous. Goodneſs cannot groan for ever, becauſe it leads to God; and the more 'tis oppreſſed, the more it grows upward, Heaven-ward, where

*Si longa levis, ſi gravis brevis.*

where it ſhall only enjoy its everlaſting Crown. The Fire upon the Altar of God, will be inextinguiſhable, if from Heaven; and thoſe Cœleſtial Sparks of Divinity, or Grace, which the Holy Spirit kindles, will by the bluſter and ſtorms of Affliction, conceive a more vehement Flame; periſh and die, they cannot, as long as God lives, from whom they derive their Being and Eternity. But, ſuppoſe all other ſweet Satisfactions, whether Spiritual Joys and Refreſhments, or Temporal Contentments be totally extinct as to preſent ſenſe; yet finally they ſhall not, becauſe they poſſeſs a perennity of Life in God: And when *Goodneſs* and *He* meet in the Superiour World, theſe will revive, and Miſery die. I grant the moſt flouriſhing Gourds of Earthly Pomp and Glory, may wither in a Night, as being a vain Pageant, and mere Phantaſtry, *Acts* 25. 23. The faireſt, freſheſt, ſweeteſt Flowers, of the Youthful Spring, of Humane Life, may be blaſted in a moment, and converted into duſt and rottenneſs: The moſt pleaſing Sun-ſhine of the ſmiling Morn, of a fortunate Proſperity, may ſuffer an Eclipſe, and iſſue in a diſmal Hurricane of inſupportable Calamities: Nay, Heaven it ſelf may ſeem to frown, and a dark Cloud to cover the Light of God's Countenance, *Lam.* 3. 44. But, none of theſe Evils can extend beyond the Grave. there are they buried, and with them *Sin*, their Cauſe, never to have a Reſurrection: Then dawns the Day of everlaſting Light and Bleſſedneſs, and all Darkneſs, Dolours and Shadows flee away. Be our Miſeries as great as they will, or can, they cannot outlive Mortality, if our guilt do not, and it ſhall not if true Repentance live within us. At the day-break of Eternity we enter upon a Life of Conten-

Contentation and Peace, as endleſs, as tranſcendent. The Death of our Bodies, is the Death of our Troubles, and the Reſurrection of thoſe Joys, over which Death hath no Power. As there will then be no more beginning of Wretchedneſs, ſo no end of Felicity. The worſt turn that the Devil, and his Inſtruments can do us, will turn to the beſt advantage, and thoſe Souls that die to the Body, ſhall live in Chriſt; they are uncloathed of Dirt and Putrefaction, that they may be for ever Cloathed with God and Glory: That as the Death of the Body, is the eaſer of all our Pains; ſo the No-death or Immortality ſucceeding, is the Introducer and Maintainer of an unboundable Fullneſs, of everlaſting Soul-Satisfactions. This we owe to the perpetual Duration and Life of God. Whence the *Pſalmiſt*, in a ſad Proſpect of the evanid Nature of preſent Things, doth ſolace himſelf with a view of the permanent Being of God, *Pſal.* 102. 11, 12. *My days are like a ſhadow that declineth, and I am withered like Graſs: But thou, Oh Lord, ſhalt endure for ever, and thy Remembrance to all Generations. I ſaid, Oh my God, take me not away in the midſt of my days, thy years are throughout all Generations. Of old haſt thou laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Work of thine Hands: They ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure; yea, all of them ſhall wax old as a Garment, as a Veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall have no end.*

We are poſſeſt of many Tranſitory Comforts, but of none Eternal beſide God: And if any true Content ariſe from thoſe movable Enjoyments, it ſprings from nothing elſe in them, except that, which being eminently in God, is in him of an e-

verlasting Nature and Perfection: Whatever pleases, doth so far refresh and comfort; but all that pleasantness, is only a little ray of Divinity, transmitted through the Cloud of Flesh and Blood, or the more clear Heavens of our Rational Powers. Amiable Relations are Comforts, beyond all things under the Sun; but their lovely Qualities are only a dark Shadow of the unparallell'd Amiableness of God. To be beloved by thy Friends is a Comfort estimable above Gold, but neither the Act, nor the Object durable, no, nor the Motive exciting or inviting that Affection. Can any Man Rationally solace himself with a Being lov'd for a moment, when he shall be deserted or hated for ever? Fading Love on Earth will not do, without the never fading Love of Heaven: Though all the World for a while adore thee, What compensating Pleasure can that bring thee, if Hell everlastingly burn thee? All thy fore-past Joys on Earth will rather add new Fewel, than administer one drop to cool thy flaming Tongue. No Love therefore is indeed considerable and comfortable, without the Eternal Love of God: Nor in the assurance of this is any hatred or rage valuable, dejecting, formidable. As Eternity is the Venom and Sting of the Torments of Hell; so 'tis the very Triumph, Jubile, and Heaven of the Joys of Heaven. If in the loss of these languishing expiring Comforts, we can succenturiate or substitute any thing of God, we richly gain by the loss as possessing unspeakably more pure, substantial, heart-reaching, durable, everliving Comforts, in the everliving Spring; who can, and will give them that relish and sweetness, which shall abundantly more than answer, what is slip'd away from us, as well in its delicious Gratefulness, as

Eternity,

Eternity. Mortality is the great disgrace of all Worldly Enjoyments, but it receives a plentiful Compensation in the Immortality of God.

Thus have I considered the Comforts comprehended in those Attributes of God, which offered themselves to the *Psalmist*'s Meditation, as I find them either expresst, or plainly implied in this Psalm.

---

## CHAP. XIV.

### *Comforts from God.*

COuld I allow my self the liberty, I might here instance those Comforts, which are administred from the consideration of the Divine Persons, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; and the Relations wherein God stands to us, and we mutually to God. But I have determined to confine my Discourse chiefly to such Heads of Matter, as fall within Cognizance of the Psalm, and not make endless Excursions to things, which none can imagine ever to enter into the Author's mind, in order to the Revival of his disconsolate Heart. I pass therefore from the Comforts, that *God is*, which was the first general to the

### 2. *The Comforts which God gives.*

That which God is in himself, and hath revealed to us, is wonderfully refreshing: But, there's also something, which not being immanent, and essentially Constitutive of the Divine Nature, but passing from him to us, doth singularly relieve our troubled Souls. Of this kind, *Promises, Providences, Privileges, Experiences*, offer themselves

ſelves to Conſideration. What was needful to be obſerved concerning *Promiſes*, fell in under *Divine Fidelity*, as included in its very Notion, therefore ſhall all further Diſquiſition anent them be ſuperſeded.

*Providence* is the tranſit of *God's Wiſdom, Power, Juſtice, Goodneſs, Faithfulneſs*, out of Heaven, and himſelf into the viſible World, Governing, Protecting, Caring for, Directing, and Ordering all, for moſt excellent Ends, worthy of God. Under the conduct hereof, all things proſperous, or adverſe, the greateſt, the moſt minute, Natural, Moral, Spiritual, neceſſary or fortuitous are deduced from their immediate proper Cauſes, guided and ſuſtained in their Actings, ſecured from external Violences, maintained in a due ſteady, agreeable Station, and order to compoſe the Beauty and Harmony of the Univerſe, and be conducible to advance the Glory of their Maker, in both the general and ſpecial purpoſes of his Love and Goodneſs, or Juſtice and Righteouſneſs. And there is not a more reviving conſideration to *God's afflicted, toſſed with tempeſt, and not comforted*, Iſa. 54. 11. than this, that they are the peculiar care and charge of Heaven, which as it is concerned for the *Catholique* good, ſo in ſpecial for *thoſe that love God, and are the called according to his purpoſe*, Rom. 8. 28 inſomuch, that Proſperity cannot be more delectable to their ſenſe, than Afflictions of all kinds are made to their Souls uſeful and profitable. 'Tis always beſt for them to be in the worſt external Circumſtances, as never being more dear to God, more regarded by him, who is moſt tender of them, when the Devil and World are moſt cruel, and when the outcaſts, off-ſcouring, and refuſe of the Earth. When

here

here they can expect nothing, beside Reviliags and Buffetings, the liberal Alms of the Churches Enemies, they are likeliest to receive the more bountiful tastes of Divine Goodness, possess more of his Grace, as a Preparation for more of his Glory, 2 *Cor.* 4. 8. to the end.

Upon this *Providence of God*, our *Psalmist* had a special eye throughout the Psalm: Whatever he desires and prays for, whatever he believes and hopes for, whatever he acknowledges and praises God for, whatever he bemoans and afflicts his Soul for, whatever he experiences and feels, was some Act, Effect, or Permission of Providence That God in the course of his Providence, would animadvert upon the insolent Barbarities of his, and the Churches Enemies, is the Expostulatory Petition of Vers. 1, 2, 3, 4. What was the Permission of *Providence?* Is the condolement and moan of Vers. 5. 6. The singular concern of Providence, is the Doctrine of Vers. 8, 9, 10. as the happy Fruits of the very Severities thereof, the Triumph of Vers. 12, 13, and the returns of its favourable Aspect, the belief of Vers. 14, 15, the notable, needful, suitable, and seasonable Interposals thereof, the experience of Vers. 17, 18, 22, and the turning of this great *Wheel* upon the Adversaries to their confusion, the Prophetick hope of Vers. 23. All jointly, together, the comfort of the Text, which *in the Multitude of his perplexed Thoughts, did look with such an amiable regard upon his Soul:* So that although the Fundamental Ground and Matter of his Satisfaction, was the Nature of God, in all its plenitude of Perfection; yet the more immediate Spring thereof, was the Egress or Issuings out of those Attributes, in all these Varieties of *Providence.* And the truth

is,

is, although what God is in himself be eminently and vertually all Comfort in the utmost degree of Excellency; yet should he confine his infinitely delectable Glories to himself only, and never ray out, and communicate of his Beauty, Grace, and Life to his Creatures, they would be utterly at a loss for Happiness. 'Tis therefore not only the Nature of this Supreme Goodness, as it transcends all in Perfection: But, also 'tis its practice and delight, and highest end; the very thing, that is called God's Glory, which he has a prime respect to in all his Actings: For, then have his Creatures the highest Motives to Honour him, when they taste most liberally of his bounty, in the noblest Instances, and he glorifies himself, in the Estimate of the World, when he is most beneficial; as the Sun is most glorious, when diffusing, without any Interception, his benign rayes and influences: All which Glories vanish, as to us in a total Eclipse, or his descent under the Horizon.

Hence then does our Joy, and Peace, and Solace actually germinate and grow, even from the glory of Divine Perfection, branching out it self, in infinite methods of *Providence*, wherein he dispenses to us of his own fulness, according to our various Exigences and Appetites. The out-goings of his Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, Fidelity and Power, in sweet and suitable Blessings and Supports, that in every Condition we can behold something of God, of greater value and consideration, than either our Mercies or Crosses. This is a potent Cordial to our Disconsolate Hearts, and replenishes them with wonderful Contentation. If these Divine Glories compass us about, care for us, keep us, we are *comforted on every side*, Psal. 71. 21. *Yea, though we walk through the Valley*

of

*of the Shadow of Death, if God be thus with us*, in his providential Efficiency for our good, *his Rod and Staff will comfort us*, Pſal. 23. 4. *Rod and Staff* Paſtoral, not Judicial or Corrective, as ſome underſtand it. But, *Providence* being vertually included in thoſe Attributes, whereof it is an effect and iſſue in diſcourſing of them; I was unavoidably led into ſome conſideration of it alſo.

2. *The Privileges* which adminiſter Conſolation in the greateſt hurry and perturbation of Thoughts are many; Two whereof only are inſinuated in this *Pſalm*, yet ſuch as ſuppoſe more. They are, 1. *Sanctification.* 2. *Propriety in God and aſſurance of it.*

1. *Sanctification* by the Word and Spirit of God, is an excellent ground of Conſolation. 'Tis indeed the firſt Foundation Stone laid in the Fabrick. In vertue of this we receive Comfort from other things. Tell any diſquieted Heart of the inexhauſtible Treaſures of everlaſting Joys and Refreſhments in God the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, That Multitudes have enjoyed on Earth, and in the Eternal Fruition whereof the Bleſſed Saints and Angels ever triumph in Heaven; which the bounty and goodneſs of God exhibits and offers to all: Tell it of the free and gracious Promiſes, and Covenant of God, that tenders the ſweeteſt and ſtrongeſt Conſolation: Exhort with the moſt charming *Rhetorick*, and raviſhing *Suada*, to embrace theſe ſo rich, ſo profitable, ſo neceſſary Proviſions of abounding *Love*: Alas! it cannot, it dare not: Why? Becauſe 'tis Preſumption, 'tis Stealth, Robbery, Sacrilege, to ſnatch away any thing, to arreſt theſe Divine and Holy things without Right. But have you not Right? No: How do you prove that? 'Tis plain: All Right

is

is founded in Sanctification. I am not Sanctified; I lie in my Sins, dead and buried in Guilt and Wrath, unregenerate out of Covenant, as not having submitted to its Conditions, in *Repentance*, *Faith*, and *New Obedience*: Therefore the Comforts of the Covenant, and of the Promises, its Branches, do not at all appertain to me. This Argument cannot be gain-said, if it assume right. 'Tis undoubtedly true, That none have Right to the Mercies of the Covenant, who do not submit to its terms; and that very yielding unfeignedly to the terms, is an act of Sanctification, which necessarily supposes the Communication of a Principle, because none can act grace sincerely, except from an inward Life of Grace, it being essential to the sincerity of an Act, that it proceed from a gracious Disposition, from a renewed sanctified Heart: For none but acts of Life (as contradistinct to *Dead Works*) entitle to the Promises. God gives a Heart of Flesh, a new Heart, and Writes his Law therein, infuses his *Fear* and *Love* thereinto, gives Repentance through the Exaltation of Jesus Christ; to whose benignity we owe the Donation of Faith also, and are altogether his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good Works, that we may walk therein evermore. Admit that these Promises and Asseverations were designed primarily for *Israel* according to the Flesh: Yet can it not be denied, that they delineate and describe the manner, and method of God's Proceedings with his *Israel* according to the Spirit. For he no where declares his intent, to alter that

*Ezek.* 36. 26, 27, 31, 32. and Ch. 20. 43, 44. and Ch. 11. 19. *Jer.* 32. 38, 39, 40. and 31. 31, 32, 33, 34. and 24. 7. *Deut.* 30. 6. *Acts* 5. 31. and 3 26. *Phil.* 1. 29. *Eph.* 2. 8, 9, 10.

that œconomy of Grace in the ſubſtance thereof, which was eſtabliſhed by the Covenant of Grace, to reduce loſt Man to the obedience of the Juſt, though the Circumſtances and Ceremonials vary. Now if acceptable (that is ſincere) Acts may iſſue from any Man, without, or antecedently to all holy Qualifications, or Habits (as they are uſually called)' twere a ſupervacaneous, needleſs, fond thing, for the Deity to promiſe them, or intereſt his own Agency about them, which yet is of a blaſphemous importance, as 'twould ſavour of the higheſt Arrogance to imagine, that I am in a Capacity to act well-pleaſingly to God, without God. For does it conſiſt with the Divine Wiſdom, and God's Ingenuous procedure with Man, to promiſe what is in Mans power, whether he promiſe or no. And if we be capable of exerting one acceptable Act without Divine Influence, Why not another and another, till frequent Acts produce a Habit, and all this excluſively to the aids of Heaven? That he muſt be made a liar, who ſaid, Joh. 15. 5. *Without me you can do nothing.* And 2 Cor. 3. 5. *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves, to think any thing, as of our ſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God.* See alſo again *Eph.* 2. 8, 9, 10. Let him ſtand forth and be a publick Spectacle of Ignominy and Malediction; who will not ſubſcribe to, or having ſubſcribed, contradicts the 10th. and 13th. *Articles of Religion*, which are theſe.

X.

*The Condition of Man, after the Fall of* Adam, *is ſuch, that he cannot turn, and prepare himſelf by his own natural ſtrength, and good Works, to Faith, and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good Works pleaſing and acceptable to God, without*

*out the Grace of God preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.*

XIII.

*Works done before the Grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they spring not of Faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make Men meet to receive Grace (or as the School Authors say) deserve Grace of Congruity; yea rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the Nature of Sin.*

If formally upright and acceptable Acts of Submission to the *Covenant*, and its conditions, could issue from wicked Men and Hypocrites, so continuing in State and Disposition, and therefore Enemies to God and Goodness; as there would be no need of the promise to *Write his Law in the Heart*, so God would be obliged in faithfulness to fulfil to them his part of the Covenant, in communicating all Covenant Mercies: But the whole implies a contradiction. For sincerely to observe the terms of the Covenant, is to be sincere in that thing, and therefore supposes the Law to be Written in the Heart, or obliges God to Write it. For the condition being observed by Man, the Engagement upon God becomes absolute; he must do his part or violate his Covenant, and be unjust to himself, and his *Son Jesus Christ*, whose undertaking founded this *New Covenant* Dispensation. Whence a cordial performance of the terms of the Covenant on our part, does really introduce or infer that sincerity of State, which is implied in the *Writing God's Laws in our Hearts, implanting therein his fear, and pouring out his Spirit on us*, which is the very Work of *Conversion*,

*ſion*, or *Regeneration*, and the baſis of all Conſolation; for Pſal. 119. 50. *This is my comfort in my affliction* [ב] *becauſe thy word hath quickned me. Thy word* in general as the Inſtrument, its precepts in particular as the Matter, principling my Heart in the nature of a *Law*, engraven on that *Fleſhly Table* by the Finger of God.

Whatever Mens Sentiments may be under Temptation, Melancholy, &c. yet ordinarily, let but this be made out to a conſidering Man, *viz.* that he is truly born again of God; and all his Troubles, Diſquiets, Agonies, Horrors of Conſcience vaniſh into nothing, and all other his Diſconſolate Thoughts are very much moderated. If his Grace be found real and ſound, his Repentance, Faith, and Love unfeigned, his Heart is at eaſe, he has a perfect Demonſtration, that God the Father is his God and Father, Jeſus Chriſt his Saviour, becauſe the Holy Ghoſt has been his Sanctifier. Now does he not doubt of the pardon of his Sins, of the ſpecial Love of God, of an intereſt in all the Benefits purchaſed by Jeſus Chriſt, of a Right to all the Promiſes, and everlaſting Conſolation and Salvation. This is the bottom of all, nothing without this will avail in the leaſt, to bring the *glad tidings of Peace* into the *Conſcience*. This, as a ſure and immovable Foundation, eſtabliſhes all our hopes of Comfort, which without it, is abſolutely impoſſible. But this ground laid, Joy, and Reſt, and Satisfaction of Soul, will infallibly arrive ſooner or later; all the Malignity and Rage upon Earth, all the Malice and Policy of Hell, all the Melancholy Imaginations of a Mans own Heart, though they may obſtruct and delay it, yet cannot finally avert and hinder it, any more than a gloomy Night can the riſing of the Sun in its ſea-

ſon. The day of Glory, Peace, and Conſolation everlaſting, will undoubtedly break
*Cant. 4. 6.* [*Hebr. breath*] upon ſuch a Soul, and *Darkneſs, Sorrows, Shadows flee away.* For theſe *Redeemed of the Lord* by power, and therefore by price, *ſhall return and come with ſinging unto Sion, and everlaſting Joy ſhall be upon their heads, they ſhall obtain Gladneſs and Joy, and Sorrow, Mourning and Sighing ſhall flee away,* Iſa. 51. 11. *Weeping may endure in the Evening, but Joy cometh in the Morning,* Pſal. 30. 5. *A Child of Prayers and Tears ſaid* Ambroſe *to* Monica, *cannot periſh.* Iſa. 53. 3. *A Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief, whom it pleaſeth the Lord to bruiſe, ſhall ſee of the Travail of his Soul and be ſatisfied.* This was verified firſt in the Head, and ſhall be alſo in the Members. They muſt paſs through the *Jordan* of *Repentance,* and there be waſh'd *ſeven times,* that they may be healed of their *Spiritual Leproſies,* but their next Stage is a welcome *Canaan* of Solace and Reſt. This is the baſis of the other *Privilege,* viz. *Propriety* in God, and aſſurance thereof, and therefore being a connex Bleſſing, more concerning it will neceſſarily fall under the following Head.

Now that the Pſalmiſt had ſome Reflections upon his Sanctification, in aſſuming to himſelf the Comforts of God, ſeems evident from the 21. verſ. where he makes a tacit Profeſſion of his *Righteouſneſs* and *Innocency,* which no doubt were to him, as in like caſe they are to any Man a ſingular Support and Satisfaction, under all the Calamities and Cruelties endured, through the violence and fury of Man. Though the Floods, and Waves, and Storms beat high from without, yet if there be a ſweet Calm within; though the World with a ſavage barbarouſneſs perſecute and purſue me

to

to Death, yet if mine own Conſcience do not reproach me, but teſtifie *that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity: I have had my Converſation in this World, not by fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the grace of God, in innocency and uſefulneſs to Men*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. This is a ſingular rejoycing and ground of Comfort, though *our ſufferings abound*, Verſ. 5. The Peace of a good Conſcience, is a powerful Antidote againſt the Poiſon of all adverſe accidents: For ſince nothing diſeaſes, diſquiets me, but only as far as it gets within me, and no external Occurrents can be ſo great Evils; as internal Sanctity is a good, becauſe the utmoſt that the fiery rage of Earth and Hell can do againſt me, is but finite, whilſt under the conduct and influence of real Holineſs, I am ſecure, that I do, and ſhall enjoy the all-ſufficient Reliefs of infinite goodneſs, and therefore my Miſeries only commit a Rape upon my imaginative and iraſcible Powers, whilſt my Comforts are ſeated deep in my Rational, which through Divine Grace have regain'd the Soveraignty; it neceſſarily follows that the potency of all outward Evils to torment me, is boundleſly ſhort of the Omnipotency of that Internal Heaven, that I feel in my conſcience to content and eaſe me, and my Sorrows will be perfectly run down by my Joys and Conſolations. But then, this I muſt acknowledge, that neither can my Conſcience be good, nor I comfortably Innocent (*i. e.* neither acting nor imagining evil againſt Men) nor Righteous (*i. e.* deſigning and doing all the good I can, out of an inward principle of Love and Juſtice) unleſs I be truly a Sanctified Perſon. For external fair demeanour toward Men, without an inward Inclination, and Affection thereto, is but only Hypocriſie before God.

2. *Privilege* is *Propriety in God*, with the assurance of it, both in Vers. 22. and in those Two Words MY GOD. For he could not without presumption or falshood say this, if he knew it not. And 'tis not the common interest of Nature founded in the Relation of Creatures, which every Man, nay Devil may justly claim, that these words here import; but a special Propriety, through Grace, founded in *Regeneration and Adoption:* In short 'tis not a congenit and general, but a federal and peculiar right in God, which must bottom our Consolation. When we are taught of God out of his Law, Vers. 12. in such a manner as to have that *Law of God Writ in our Hearts*, according to the tenor of the *Covenant of Grace*, Jer. 31. 33, &c. God thereby giving us a sensible Demonstration that *he is our God*, so as he is not to those, who though the *Work of his hands* of Power, yet are not his *Workmanship by Grace*, *created in Christ Jesus to good Works*, Ephes. 2. 10. Then, and not till then have we Right to the Fruits of *Righteousness in Peace and Joy unspeakable*, and upon our assurance, *Right in them.* 'Tis but little Satisfaction to be able to plead no better title to God, than Apostate Spirits or Infidels: But if we can upon good Grounds assure our selves that God is ours, in the singular Relation of a gracious Father, who hath begot us again to a lively *hope*, *through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead*; we therein have also the evidence, that every thing in God is ours, to enstate us in the Perfection of Felicity and Consolation. He that is blest with any Plerophory that God is federally his, and consequently that he hath a clear title to Jesus Christ, and all his Benefits; hath also a full and sufficient Testimony, in that very thing, of a sure and

and indefeisible right to the Holy Spirit and all his Comforts: For these are absolutely inseparable both in Nature, and Divine Donation. And if we have an interest in one Covenant Blessing, 'tis a pledge of assurance that we have all. They are four.

1. *Sanctification* (of which before) *I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts.*

2. *Propriety in God or Adoption. I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a People.*

3. *Special Illumination, or saving Knowledge. They shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*

4. *Pardon of Sin or Justification. I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and their Iniquities will I remember no more. All here is, will and shall, Words of Authority and Command.*

These Four, are not only by the Covenant indissolubly connected, but also in the reason of the thing: For there can be no possible evidence that God is ours, in special, and hath savingly enlightned our Minds, and pardoned our Sins, but only *real and undissembled Goodness*, and that which is of God's Creation, by *Writing his Laws in our Hearts* can be no other: Therefore this is the leading Mercy in the Covenant, as inferring the rest, and declaring the truth of all. If then *God be ours*, we are certainly *Sanctified, Illuminated and Pardoned*; but the contrary, if God be not ours by peculiar and special Right. They mutually prove each other, and the absence or denial of one excludes all; 'tis impossible they should be divided. Canst thou without self-deceiving, say with the *Psalmist*, and in his sence [MY GOD] then canst thou as truly say, *I am Pardoned, I am Sanctified*, &c.

Here then is the very Root of all Spiritual Comfort. For *trouble of Conſcience* (which is its contrary) is founded by Sin. The Filth, the Guilt, the Power afflict and wound our Spirits. If theſe be removed, the ground of the trouble vaniſhes; and if we have an inward feeling, and aſſurance, that they are removed, the trouble it ſelf is actually taken away. Now *Pardon* is the taking away the guilt of Sin, we have no reaſon to fear the Wrath to which it did bind us over; and *Sanctification* is the taking away the *Power and Filth* of Sin in us. I ſay [in us] for *Sanctification* doth not aboliſh the filthy Nature of Sin in it ſelf, but rather diſcover it to us more abundantly, to excite our abhorrency and loathing, and this very Deteſtation is the main of our cleanſing from the filth of Sin; this waſhes away that ſtain, wherewith our Souls were blemiſhed, that is, God deals with us as if there were none, is as kind and favourable to us, and as freely converſes with us, as if we never had been polluted, and will continue ſo to do till we renew the defilement. For the ſake of Chriſt he overlooks all thoſe ſpots and deformities, the turpitude and diſgrace whereof made us cover our Faces in ſhame, before his pure, all-diſcerning Eye; and he looks upon us, and we look upon our ſelves, as clear, unblamable, and beautiful in his Eyes, when we really hate thoſe Evils that have defiled us, and (as the ſpring of that hatred, without which it can never be, nor be pleaſing to God) when we are repleniſhed with the Riches of his Grace, and adorned with the Robes of his Sons Righteouſneſs; for both concur to our acceptation. *Sanctification* alſo deſtroys the Commanding, but not at firſt the Rebelling, the Regal, but not Tyrannical Power of

of Sin; though it be our ſtrength even againſt this, and at laſt will aboliſh it. It ſo ſubdues our Luſts, that they ſhall not Reign, though they may reſiſt as contumacious Enemies. They are look'd upon as Traitors to be deſtroy'd. That is, our ſtrongeſt and moſt delightful bent of Will, being for God and goodneſs againſt Sin; we ſin not out of Love to ſin as dutiful Subjects obey their Sovereign out of love to obedience. Yet ſo maſterful and imperious are our Corruptions, that they will fight againſt us under their Chains, and taking their advantage, knock us down and raviſh us; that according to *Rom.* 7. 18. to the end, we ſometimes *do that we would not, or do not that we would, our delight being in the Law of God, after the inner Man*, which no unregenerate Man can truly ſay. But the *Law in our Members* does [ἀνθιστρατεύεν] counterwar and captivate; and *Sin dwelling in us* does overbear our moſt determinate purpoſes in ſome particular Act, although for the main, and in the general courſe of our lives we keep it under, alway diſlike it, are afflicted with it, would give Worlds to be rid of it, and uſe God's appointed means for mortifying it, that we may gain an abſolute Victory: Though it may get the better in ſome ſlighter skirmiſhes, yet we remain Maſters of the Field. In brief, when Sin has our liking, allowance, love, delight, 'tis a King; when not a Tyrant. The former is inconſiſtent with *Sanctification*, not the latter; therefore does not debar our right to *Pardon and Peace*, though it may darken our Evidence, and ſo damp our Comfort. But if we enjoy this aſſurance, that God is ours, we have Evidence alſo that Grace is ours, Pardon is ours, Peace is ours, and therefore *may ſolace our ſelves in its abundance*,

Pſal. 37. 11. As on the contrary, antecedently to this aſſurance, there can be no ſecure and well bottomed, although there may be a fallacious and preſumptuous Peace. For Peace of conſcience alway ſuppoſes Peace with God, and this diſcovered by ſome overt act, elſe 'tis but a drunken Dream. If a Man have no teſtimony that God is reconciled to him, 'tis all one in effect, as if he were not reconciled. The old Maxim muſt here obtain *non eſſe, & non apparere, tantidem ſunt.* The privilege we enjoy is to us a *non-entity*; the comfort we feel not, to us is not. *My Soul* is in woe becauſe I have offended God, my trouble cannot, muſt not ceaſe, till I know that the offence is paſt by and forgiven, no nor then neither wholly; if I be an ingenuous Child, I ſhall be grieved whenever I review the diſingenuous baſeneſs of my behaviour toward my heavenly Father, although he reſolve never to remember it to my prejudice; yet with this difference; before pardon I ſhall be afflicted with a tormenting Sorrow, the iſſue of Fear, which will at preſent extinguiſh and overthrow my comfort; but after ſenſe of Remiſſion only, with a more generous Compunction, and godly Sorrow, the fruit of Love, conſiſtent with, although it ſomething diminiſh and detract from, the fulneſs and ſweetneſs of my Conſolation. If I can ſit down content under the diſhonour I have done, and the Provocation I have given unto my affectionate and tender hearted Father, I am an unworthy Child; nay if I ſo little and lightly regard his anger, as to be in no pain, but at eaſe under it, and ſo affront and undervalue his Love, as to be at reſt and content without it; I am a Rebel, not a Child, a Devil, not a Saint. Now *let a Meſſenger be with me, one of a thouſand, to ſhew my*

*my uprightneſs*, Job 33. 23, 24. that I have ſincerely obſerv'd the Conditions of the promiſe of Pardon, *and therefore God is gracious to me, and ſaith, deliver him from the pit*, execute not the ſentence of Condemnation pronounced by the Law againſt him, *I have found a Ranſome or Atonement*, the Satisfaction my Juſtice hath received at the hands of the *Redeemer*, ſhall be available for him, to all intents and purpoſes, as fully as if he himſelf in perſon had given it: *Mine anger is turned away from him, I am at peace with him, I have pardoned him:* If I have good teſtimony of this, it quiets my Heart, diſpels my Doubts, allays my Sorrows ſatisfies my Conſcience, repleniſhes my Soul with Comfort and Peace.

Hence that ſweet reviving Proclamation, *Iſa.* 40.1. *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my People, ſaith your God; ſpeak ye comfortably* [Hebr. *to the heart*] *to* Jeruſalem, *and cry unto her*, [כִּי] *becauſe her warfare is accompliſhed*, [כִּי] *becauſe her Iniquity is pardoned*, [כִּי] *becauſe ſhe hath received from the hand of the Lord* [כִּפְלַיִם] *two double for all her ſins.* There is an expreſs cauſal Connexion betwixt theſe things. Proclaim Comfort, becauſe 'tis thus and thus. Here are three Grounds of Comfort, and all from [*your God.*] I begin with the laſt and loweſt, which is therefore the Foundation.

1. Puniſhment inflicted to the *Satisfaction* of *Juſtice*. *She hath received two double.* She, *i. e.* the Church, a Body complex and compounded of *Head and Members:* If not in the Members, yet in the Head Chriſt Jeſus, ſhe has born the Indignation of the Lord in ſo full a meaſure, that all the further claims and demands of Juſtice as to her, are finally ſilenced as far as they concern the Penalty. And 'tis not unuſual in Scripture, for that

to be ascribed to the [Head Christ / Body the Church] which is proper to the [Body / Head,] and this in consideration of the Mystical Union, and Communion betwixt the Head and Members. Act 9. 4. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* 2 Cor. 1. 5. *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our Consolation aboundeth by Christ,* Rom. 8. 17. *if we suffer with him.* Isa. 49. 3. *And said unto me, thou art my Servant, O* Israel, *in whom I will be glorified.* 'Tis apparently spoke to, and of Christ, as the whole Context demonstrates. But let the sense be proper and not relative to Christ, *viz. that the Body, the Church, had suffered Double,* i. e. *sufficient* in the estimate of her tender and compassionate God, who is afflicted in all her Afflictions, and in the depths of his Love, makes aggravating, greatning Representations of all the Miseries she groans under, as if she had born Punishments truly more than proportionable to her sins; yet this implies both an antecedent Compensation made by Christ, in vertue whereof God is so wonderfully propitious, and candid in his Opinion and Sentiments concerning her Sufferings: And also, that although these were not a real and full Satisfaction in the nature of the thing, yet they were accepted as such, and so accounted in the repute and benign Interpretation of her reconciled God, who seems as it were repentingly, and rueingly to declare this, as *Jer.* 31. 20. *Hosea* 11. 8, 9.

2. Since there seems to be not only a causal dependance of these three, and the Comfort here tendred, but also of each upon other, that the latter appears to be a ground and reason of the former, hence grievous Suffering is alledged as the Motive upon which the Divine Majesty was pleas'd to vouchsafe Pardon. *Her Iniquity is pardoned, because*

*cauſe ſhe hath received two-double*, &c. Elſe [כִּי] muſt be here Tranſlated [*that*] as in the two former Clauſes. Indeed in the *New Covenant Oeconomy*, Satisfaction made [*Actually* or *Vertually*] (*as the Lamb of God was ſlain from the beginning of the World*,) is Antecedent to Pardon, and the meritorious Cauſe of it.

3. By like Reaſon both from the Nature of the thing, and the Contexture of theſe Clauſes, *Warfare* [*or appointed time for hoſtility*] *is accompliſhed, when Sin is Pardoned. The Fault being forgiven, the Puniſhment* [*Eternal at leaſt*] *is remitted*, and ſometimes the *Temporal* wholly, however in the nature of a ſatisfactory Penalty. *Guilt is pardoned*, but the Eſſence of Guilt conſiſts in a binding over to Wrath or Puniſhment: Therefore the puniſhment is remitted in this Notion, that it ſhall not be inflicted in vertue of that Obligation to Wrath, although the very ſame material Pains, under another form, *viz.* as *Corrections*, *ver.* 12. may be undergone, nay muſt be, in ſome degree and kind. *Acts* 14. 22. *Pſal.* 34. 19. 2 *Tim.* 3. 12, *&c.* I know no Declaration or Promiſe made by God, that theſe and the like ſhall not continue part of *Canonical Scripture*, and be true to the Worlds end. *Afflictions* are formally Penal, till Sin be remitted, but afterward the Sting is taken out, and they are not Conflicts of War, but only *Chaſtiſements of Peace*. The Enmity of God is then terminated, the Warfare betwixt him and the Soul iſſued, in a ſerene, perfect, and everlaſting Tranquility and Peace. And therefore,

*Remiſſâ culpâ, remittitur pœna.*

4. Theſe Foundations being laid, the Word of Promiſe Proclaims and Crys, *Comfort ye, Com-*

*fort*

*fort ye your ſelves, for I am your God*, who command and warrant you to do it: There's nothing now to debar you from aſſuming it, and quieting your troubled Hearts with the application of it; it is ready for you and you for it; it invites you with its amiable aſpect, to run into its Embraces, and ſolace your ſelves with all the Marrow and ſweetneſs comprehended in the Covenant and Promiſes; all is yours by right. And conſequently,

*Laſtly*, When God proclaims Peace, and crys *Comfort ye, Comfort ye*, Conſcience tranſgreſſes, if it do not ſo likewiſe. For being God's Viceroy and Judge in Man, it hath no Commiſſion to Act, but deriv'd from God; from which it muſt not, cannot ſwerve an Hair's-breath without incurring the Penalty of its Preſumption. The Law of God in Nature and Scripture is the perfect and adequate Rule, and Standard of all its Proceedings; herein are all its Powers contain'd, a counterpart whereof it retains, (after Illumination) within it ſelf, which Copy is null if it do not perfectly agree with the Original: To interline, or raſe out, does wholly evacuate, and deſtroy the validity of its proceedings. Therefore whatever God ſays or does in the Concerns of his Government within us, Conſcience muſt not vary from in the leaſt tittle; it muſt ſpeak when and what he does; and be ſilent where he is ſo. If God condemn, Conſcience muſt do ſo likewiſe, if he abſolve, Conſcience muſt juſtifie alſo, neither adding to his Words, nor diminiſhing, nor yet concealing his Counſels. If then he be at Peace, Conſcience is obliged no longer to proclaim War. If he call to Comfort, it muſt not contradict his Calls, and ſo oppoſe and blaſpheme his Grace, it muſt harmonize with Heaven, or elſe it abjures

its

its Allegiance to *God*, and acts by Commiſſion from *Satan*, and lyes againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*.

In ſumm, all Spiritual Diſcomfort is finally reſolvable into trouble, 1. about a Man's [1] State [Abſolute / Relative] or [2] Frame of Soul, or [3] Way of Walking, or [4] Particular Acts of Sin, or [5] Satan's Temptations, or [6] Divine Derelictions; under all which there is abundant Comfort in this [MY GOD]. For if he be, my State is good, witneſs the Covenant. My Ways and Frame ſhall be ſo, *Jer.* 32. 38, 39, 40, 41, and 24. 7. *Deut.* 30. 1, to 10, Incluſive. *Ezek.* 11. 19, 20. and 36. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, the latter part of 36, and beginning of 37. By theſe exceeding great and precious Promiſes, not only Healing, Sanctifying, Stabliſhing, but alſo *Preventing* and *Pardoning Grace* is given for particular Acts of Sin, and aſſurance that God will not finally forſake us, therefore not leave us to the Will and Power of the Old Serpent, though he tempt to Sins as black as the Regions he Inhabits, as foul as his own Face, as malignant as his own venomous Heart. *The Fear of God* which his *everlaſting Covenant* engages to give, will command, urge and enforce thy diſſent; or the *Love of God* will oblige him to Pardon as he hath promiſed: if thy Conſent be raviſh'd, becauſe his *Covenant Grace*, *the Law in the Heart*, will enable to *Repent* and *Believe for Pardon*. Here's all. The Comfort of *Sanctification* we have in the forecited *Pſal.* 119. 50. and *Iſa.* 12. 1. *O Lord, I will praiſe thee, though thou waſt angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou comfortedſt me.* Rom. 5. 1. *Being Juſtify'd by Faith, we have Peace with God.* There's the Comfort of *Juſtification*, upon which two all Spiritual Comforts depend, yea and Temporal alſo; upon the

the latter as to their Subſtance, and the former as its Evidence. For we know not that we are pardoned, but only by feeling our ſelves purified by God's Holy Spirit of Grace. Whence *Iſa.* 32. 24. *The Inhabitant ſhall not ſay I am ſick, the People that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their Iniquity.* Sickneſs the ſharpeſt, the neareſt, the moſt perilous of all Bodily Troubles, by a *Synecdoche*, put for all the reſt; the bitterneſs whereof is antidoted by the ſweet of Pardon and Peace; ſenſe of Pardon will take away ſenſe of Pain, becauſe it takes out the Poyſon and Curſe of it. That is the comfort of forgiveneſs or exemption from eternal intolerable Pains, does out-balance the trouble of any temporary tolerable Pains, as joy for the birth of a Man-Child drowns the remembrance and ſenſe, of all preceeding Pangs and Sorrows, *Joh.* 16. 21.

*Laſtly*, If to all theſe be ſuperadded any plain and ſenſible Experiments of Divine Goodneſs, in the ſpecial Fruits of it, this doth abundantly ſatisfie and ſolace our Souls, as compleating our evidence of right, to the Comforts of God; being as it were an immediate Teſtimony from Heaven, that God is ours in Covenant, and owns us as his peculiar Treaſure, *Mal.* 3. 15. For 'tis a confirmation of our Aſſurance of, and Title to Comfort, under the Hand and Seal of the Holy Spirit of Grace and Conſolation. This contributes to Comfort thus, and thus only, as corroborating our aſſured Perſwaſion and Evidence, that our Peace is not ſelf-flattery and deceit. For 'tis merely in vertue of Aſſurance, that we are enabled to comfort our ſelves in *God*. Aſſurance, I ſay, in both its parts, both as referring to an external Object, *viz. Propriety in God, all of God,* and

and as reſpecting thoſe inward Qualifications, and Diſpoſitions, which if I do not know to be true and ſound, I can have no Evidence that God, or any Covenant Mercy is mine. For I can have no demonſtration hereof but only by the Effects: And if I be not ſure that theſe are genuine, the true Productions of *God's Relation-Love*, the Legitimate iſſue of the Marriage Union betwixt Chriſt and my Soul, I cheat my ſelf, under the diſguiſe of a fallacious Peace, into real Wretchedneſs, and Woe. The Aſſurance therefore of the Truth and Sincerity of my Grace, is to me the very bottom Stone in the Foundation of my Comfort; and an experimental ſenſe of the vital Influence, Preſence and Power of that indwelling Grace is the baſis of this Aſſurance. This the *Pſalmiſt* here does make the neareſt ground of his aſſuming to himſelf Comfort in God, *ver.* 17, 18. *Unleſs the Lord had been my help, my Soul had almoſt* [*or quickly*] *dwelt in ſilence.* This was an Experience in a Temporal Caſe, and plainly implies that in his extreme peril, when there was no help or hope, viſible in and from the World; yet God did interpoſe in a peculiar remarkable manner, ſo that it could not but be apparent, that his Deliverance was a ſpecial work of Providence. So *ver.* 18. *When I ſaid my Foot ſlippeth thy Mercy, O Lord, held me up.* I was in ſuch eminent danger, ſo near falling, that I could not ſee any poſſibility of recovering my ſelf, but

*Betwixt the Stirrup and the Ground,*
*Mercy I crav'd, and Mercy found.*

A viſible, palpable, obſervable, ſpecial Intervention of Mercy, ſuſtain'd me, when otherwiſe I

was

was irrecoverably gone. These were possibly some uncommon undertakings of *Grace* and *Providence* for him, like that in diverting *Saul* from the pursuit, when he had hunted him to a view; and the other in preventing his revenge upon *Nabal*, or such as *Hezekiah* beg'd, *Isa.* 38. 14.

1 *Sam.* 23. 6, 27. and *chap.* 25.

I know Experiences are things of late more derided than understood by some Admirers of a Rational Religion, but whose pretended Reason is indeed too hard for their Religion, overturning its Basis, that Lowliness, which would instruct them to think there are other Men and Christians beside, that understand themselves, though not understood by these, and no more dote on an Animal Religion than their Accusers, who are prejudic'd and prepossest against them, by other things than either Religion, or Reason, or common Sence. But these I refer to the afterthoughts of one of the great *Propugnators* of that way, the Author of *Anti-Sadducism*, Page 39, 40, in 4°, in one point of the highest Experience, and sometimes most of all scoft at, *viz. Communion with God.* His Reason at length was reconciled to the Thing, yet so will not his Charity to the Persons of those that alway own'd it, they must be still *Melancholists*, and any thing ill enough, which a stout Reasoner *ex Particulari*, can make them. But possibly their Reason as in that, so in other particulars, that have undergone the same fate, may in like manner approve it self, when it has the happiness to be thus an *Aborigin* in the Rational World, for 'tis below the grandeur thereof to receive it from the poor despised *Animal.*

Well,

Well, bleſſed be God, that Heaven is an Experimental as well as Rational State; although, I doubt, the Religion thereof will on that account proceed and commence animal, in the Schools of *Reaſons Idolizers*. 'Tis no matter, I ſhall ſtill commend three things, as neceſſary Antecedents to Sincerity, in the practice of true Religiouſneſs, 1*ſt*. *Reaſon* the loweſt, the *Handmaid*, which muſt ſubmit and veil to the 2*d*. *Faith*, the *Chamberlain*, of which is begotten the 3*d*. *Experience*, the *Treaſurer*, the *Heir of Faith*, which hath the honour to abide, live and inherit when Faith ceaſes and dies, yet it is not poſthumous, but brought up under it, till it arrive at maturity in *Paradiſe*. When I ſpeak of Faith, I am not ſo fond as to poſtpone a credence to Divine Revelations in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtaments. I build all Chriſtian Faith upon that bottom ſolely, and excluſively to all Unwritten Traditions, or pretended Revelations which can never found a Divine Faith, of which alone I diſcourſe. Neither am I ſo ſtark drunk as to think that thoſe Scripture Revelations are not moſt highly rational, in the matter of them, as well as the motives to believe them; nor yet ſo frantick as to advance any Experiences unconform to Scripture. Let the *Antinomians* and *Papiſts* ſee to the firſt; the promoters of Reaſon in contradiſtinction (not to ſay contradiction) to Scripture, look to the ſecond; and *Enthuſiaſts* to the laſt. *Experience* with me is nothing but a ſenſible (yet rational) feeling of the performance of Promiſes, to a Man's ſelf in particular. When my inward ſenſe aſſures me, that the ſpiritual Covenant Mercies, are really beſtow'd upon me, and my outward Circumſtances demonſtrate that God owns me with the Tempo-

ral, I do not place these in Opposition but Conjunction, for without the inward Experiments, the outward signifie nothing. They may be and are *Providential*, but not *Federal*. Both are call'd *Tasts of God's Goodness* and *Graciousness*, or of his *Word*, *Psal.*34.8. 1 *Pet.*2.3. *Psal.*119.103, *&c.* Now when an Experience of the performance of any Promise superadds as it were a Seal to that Faith which receiv'd it as true, it gives a more full confirmation to a Man's title to the Covenant, and all the Blessings and Comforts of it, and a further ground of quieting the Heart, and therefore is *completive of Comfort, as Faith is inchoative.* For if I do but weakly and doubtingly apprehend and apply the Comforts that are in God; yet when he bestows upon me some special token of his Favour, 'tis an emboldning, encouraging, pledge of his willingness to grant more, and a testimony of his owning my right to all. As in case of *litigious Titles*, when all stands upon the same bottom, if the Occupant freely yield up part to the Claimer, 'tis a vertual acknowledgement of his right to all, and therefore exceedingly animates him in his future proceedings for its recovery. Oh *Divine Experience!* the blessed earnest of everlasting Consolation, how sweet, how satisfying art thou? When a disconsolate Heart is sick of its own wants and woes, weary of it self and the World as insufficient to yield the least drachm of solid Contentation, 'tis necessitated at last to send out *Faith* as a *Harbinger* to seek for *Peace* and *Rest*, which it can no where find but in God, and no way deduce from God, but through those free Engagements which his boundless Goodness has exhibited in the Covenant of Grace. These Blessings are as a *Honey-comb* in the promise, but *Heaven*

in

in the performance. Indeed Heaven is no more nor less than the full and universal accomplishment of Promises; and that partial, incompleat fulfilling them in this Life, wherein consists the happiness of Experience, is no other than an Antepast or foretast of those eternal Felicities which constitute that immortal state.

And now am I got to the foot of that Ladder whose top is Heaven. Comfort is the Off-spring of God, and thus descends to Man. The matter and substance of it, or the thing comforting, is originally something of or from the Divine Nature it self. Which when we had forfeited by Sin, the ever-blessed *Jesus*, *God's Eternal Son*, did interpose to regain and purchase for us, and remove all impediments to the conferring it on God's part. Whence he is call'd the *Consolation of Israel*, *Luk.* 2. 25. And our Consolations are said *to abound by Christ*, 2 Cor. 1. 5. *If there be any Consolations in Christ*, is the Hypothesis of a very powerful Argument, *Phil.* 2. 1. And that Prayer, 2 *Thes.* 2. 16, 17. is very considerable, *Now our* LORD *Jesus Christ himself, and* GOD *even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting Consolation through Grace: Comfort your Hearts, and establish you in every good Word and Work.* Hence the Father who is the principal Author, and Efficient hath obliged himself to bestow it, and therefore is call'd *the God of all Comfort*, 2 Cor. 1. 3. *God that comforteth those that are cast down*, 2 Cor. 7. 6. See *Isa.* 51. 11, 12. *Hos.* 2. 14. *Isa.* 66. 13. Especially that remarkable place forementiond *Heb.* 6. 16, 17, 18. The *Holy Ghost* hath his part also, as removing the Impediments of Comfort on Man's part, preparing for it, and in the use of the means of Grace and Peace the Word and Ordi-

nances, applying it actually to us; whence if our Translation be of any Authority, he has the Name of *Comforter* given and appropriated to him, *Joh.* 14. 16, *&c.* I mention the Word and Ordinances of God, as the means of Comfort, and not without warrant. *Psal.* 119. 82. *Mine Eyes fail for thy Word, saying, when wilt thou Comfort me.* Rom. 15. 4. *Whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* And to this purpose is it said of the *Comforter*, Joh. 14. 26. *He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* And *Joh.* 15. 26. *He shall testifie of me*; all this in pursuance of his Office as *Comforter*.

Now by these means

1. He reveals Comfort to us in the Covenant and Promise.

2. Declares to us the terms and conditions upon which Comfort may be assuredly obtain'd, and

3. Works those Conditions in us:

1. *Repentance*, to qualifie and prepare for it.

2. *Faith*, to apprehend and apply it; which

4. Experience feels, with all other connex Graces, operating effectually in our Hearts. Wherefrom,

*Lastly*, A full Assurance arises, 1. That our Graces are sound and sincere, 2. That the Promises are our Portion, the Lord our God, Christ our Saviour, the Holy Spirit our Sanctifier, Comfort, Joy, and Heaven our Inheritance, by special Covenant-right, and from all these together necessarily grows *actual Peace of Conscience, and true spiritual Consolation*; but then 'tis only as far as we have the first *Assurance*, for without this we cannot assume to our selves any true Joy and Comfort;

fort; as far as the reſt iſſue in Aſſurance, but no farther, have we ſolace in and from them. Let there be as firm a Foundation laid, both without me, and within me, as is poſſible; yet if I know nothing of it, my Heart is uneaſie and unſettled, I am no better for it. But knowing that Sincerity gives right to all in God; as ſoon as ever I attain true Faith of Evidence, all is compoſed into a quiet Settlement and Peace. And ſo certain is this, that even the falſe and fallacious Joys of both Hypocrites and prophane Perſons, muſt have an anſwerable perſwaſion in the Mind of a right to them. For no Man can take comfort in that which he knows he hath nothing to do with. Indeed their Aſſurance is as groundleſs (though they do not know ſo much) as their Comfort is illuding and impoſtorous; and alway the nature of the Comfort doth perfectly anſwer the quality of the Aſſurance; if *this* be ſound and good, *that* is ſo alſo, if otherwiſe we gull our ſelves into real woe, under a deluſory dream of merely phantaſtical Conſolation.

Hence there's an abſolute neceſſity of abundance of Experience, and diligent trial, whether our Experience be conform to the Word of God; if we deſire that our Aſſurance may ſtand upon a ſecure baſis. For if we feel not the real effects of Divine Power and Goodneſs fulfilling to us in truth the Promiſe and Covenant of Grace, in writing the Divine Laws in our Hearts, and enabling and exerciſing us to obſerve and obey them; we can have no Aſſurance, that any thing is right within us, or gives right to any thing without us. We muſt experience a ſound Work, that without fallacy may be aſcribed to God himſelf. For no Grace is true which is not of God's

creating, to him doth the Scripture every where aſcribe it. One full place for all. *Ezek.* 36. 26, 27. *A new Heart alſo will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take the ſtony Heart out of your Fleſh, and I will give you an Heart of Fleſh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes, and ye ſhall keep my Statutes and do them--Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall loath your ſelves in your own ſight, for your Iniquities, and for your Abominations,* &c. Firſt the Principle and Power muſt be confer'd by God, then and not till then the practice by Man will commence and begin, but all under the influence of Divine Grace. 'Tis firſt *I will, I will*, then *you ſhall*; and again to ſhow that the very [*you ſhall*] though Man's act, yet is not of and from Man, it follows, *not for your ſake do I this*, [*do I*] therefore not you without me, nor ſo by my aid neither, as that the doing it can more juſtly and truly be aſcribed to you than me, yet will not I do it without you, for ye ſhall loath your ſelves, *i. e.* by my Power; nor will I do it without your asking, for *Ver.* 37. *Yet for this will I be enquired of by the Houſe of Iſrael, to do it for them.*

We muſt then have good experience, eſpecially of the Work of Divine Grace, in making the ſoundneſs of our *Actings of Repentance* and *Faith* apparent, and the fruits of both muſt concur to give a clear Teſtimony, that they are right and genuine, ſuch a full and thorow ſpiritual ſenſe and feeling muſt we have of them, and their agreeableneſs to the Rules and Laws of Scripture that require them; as to be able to ſatisfie our ſelves, and approve our Conſciences to God, that we do not play the Hypocrites, and cheat our ſelves and the World

World with Counterfeits instead of unsophisticate sincere Graces, else we can never be blest with any certainty, that God is ours, and his Comforts ours, and therefore cannot groundedly take comfort in him. 'Tis then demonstratively clear, that all the boundless Treasures of Soul-satisfying Contents, which are laid up in *God*, *Christ*, the *Holy Spirit*, *Heaven*, the *Covenant* and *Promises*, are no actual Comfort to us, but only by the mediation of Grace within us; nor Grace it self except its Integrity and Truth be evidenced plainly to us. So that in short, all Comfort does immediately spring from Assurance. A Man hath so much Peace as he hath of this, and not a jot more. This is the neareſt matter and ground thereof, yet not absolutely and in it self considered merely but relatively to Grace, but neither Grace absolutely, no, 'tis relatively to God, that it introduces real Consolation, *viz.* as an evidence that *God is ours*, and as it carries out our Souls to him, to place their whole Felicity in him. This therefore is the Genealogy or Pedigree of Comfort, 'tis the immediate Off-spring of Assurance, which is the Off-spring of Grace, which is the Off-spring of God. Assurance comforts, as it refers to Grace; Grace comforts as it leads to God; God comforts Architectonically, Originally, Eminently, as the principal Efficient and Matter of all Legitimate Consolation. Thus have I finished all I conceive necessary to explain the Nature, Origin, Matter and Method of deriving Comfort into the Soul.

## CHAP. XV.

### *Inferences.*

### I. Doctrinal.

WHat remains, is only to deduce some profitable Inferences, *Doctrinal* and *Practical*, immediately from the Text in its Coherence and Scope, and such only as are clearly included in the Bowels of it. To direct wherein, I shall make 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. my *Card* and *Compass*. All Scripture is Divinely inspir'd, and profitable, for Doctrine,

for { Evidence, Conviction, Reproof, } for { Correction, Rectification, Reformation, } for { Instruction Discipline, }

which is even that in Righteousness.

*My Doctrinal Inferences are Three.*

1. Hence see that it is a very lamentable thing for a Man to be left by God, to be worried by his own *Thoughts*. In what deplorable Circumstances would *David* have been, had there been no Divine Comforts, to moderate and assuage the violence of his turbulent Cogitations? There's nothing in Man better or worse than Thoughts. If a *Good Angel* act them, they are *Birds* of *Paradise*. They are the surest Guides, the sweetest Companions, the soundest Comforts, the *First Movers* in the Heaven of *Vertue* and *Goodness*, the *last alive to God*, the most delightful Anticipations of Everlasting Blessedness, which realize those *Pleasures* and *Joys*, that

that are unutterable, the bright and fair *Idea* of the Inviſible Majeſty and Glory of God Himſelf. Contrarily, if acted by an Evil *Genius*, they are the very *Beelzebub* of the leſſer World, the *Ignis Fatuus*, that leads us into the Pits and Precipices of *Error, Wickedneſs, and Woe:* They are the *Locuſts and Smoak* of the Bottomleſs Pit, that darken the Heavens of Peace and Contentation, devour and blaſt every living thing in us, the dreadful Image and Repreſentation of the black Horrours and Confuſions of Hell. A Man is a Brute, a Fool, a Madman, or a Devil, as his Thoughts are; and his Thoughts will be as bad as Hell can make them, if Heaven do not ſuperviſe, govern, and direct them; and yet there needs no other Fiend to debauch them, than that Corruption that firſt enter'd into us by them, and does perpetually dog and haunt them. How many by them have been hurried into *Hoſpitals*, *Halters*, *Bridewel*, *Bedlam*, and the diſmal Regions of eternal Darkneſs? How do they act all the Parts, appear in all the Forms, advance to all the degrees of Malignity and Miſery? But in none more than the *Melancholick*. Here Satan rides as in a triumphant Chariot, the Wheels are Thoughts, which by preſenting Objects, and exciting Corruptions, he ſets a going, ſometimes with Conſent, ſometimes without. Hence proceed *Atheiſtical*, *Blaſphemous*, &c. Injections, which raviſh the Mind, in the greateſt abhorrence of the Will: Hence deſpairing Reflections, which realize and antedate thoſe intolerable Cruciations of outer Darkneſs; Hence terrifying Motions, which deaden and betray the Aids and Supports of Reaſon and Religion, and finds a Devil in every Corner. Any one Thought, armed by Juſtice, and acted by Satan, is ſufficient to

embitter

embitter all the Joys of Life, and render a Man as miſerable, as is poſſible on this ſide, never ending Miſeries. Who then can bear up againſt a Multitude? *Guarde me Dieu de moy*, was my School-Maſters Motto. No Man can have a greater finite Enemy than his own Thoughts: A Multitude of theſe Tormentors within, is worſe, than all the ravenous *Lions, and Bears, and Tigers, and Wolves*, in the Univerſe; which by Power, or Induſtry, or Policy, Art, and Wit, a Man may avoid, but how ſhall he eſcape from himſelf; and that which is neareſt himſelf, his wild, mad, untutour'd, ungovernable Cogitations? 'Twas then no improper Litany, *From my ſelf, good God, guard and deliver me.*

2. See here, that the beſt of Men, may fall into ſuch Perplexities, that all natural Aids may be inſufficient for their Relief. *Not* [*my Carnal Contents, and the Pleaſures of Senſe*]; *not* [*my Worldly Grandeur, and the Hopes, or Fruition of a Kingdom*]; *not* [*my Invincible Spirit, Valour, Conduct, Victories, and Military Glory*]; *not* [*my Rational Conſiderations, and Philoſophy,*] *but* [*thy Comforts*] are the Sanctuary of his perſecuted, and perſecuting Thoughts: Here, and here alone, does he find repoſe and reſt. Indeed, if it were not thus, we could not be our ſelves. Did we enjoy all at home, we ſhould not be Men, but Gods. *Self-ſufficiency* is an incommunicable *Perfection* of the *Deity*. He that can be without all other Perſons and Things, is all. Sociableneſs is the Property and Felicity of Humane Nature; and therefore declares its Dependency. Man cannot be without Man, much leſs without God. But if the Conſtitution of our Natures had been ſuch, that in all Exorbitances of Thoughts, we could readily compoſe

poſe our ſelves, into a ſerene and ſober Calm of Reſt: Such is our Native Pride and Self-fullneſs, ſince we were debaſed, and emptied of all good, by the Fall, that we ſhould never be induc'd to pay our due Tribute of Honour, and Homage unto God, to which not ſo much Ingenuity leads us, as neceſſity drives us. 'Tis true, in the State of Integrity, Man was endowed with an Ability (not to recompoſe and redintegrate the Diſorders and Ruines in his Mind and Conſcience, introduced by irregular, peſtilent, and intemperate Cogitations, which ſuppoſe Loſs of Integrity, but) to maintain in his Soul, a conſtant and durable Peace and Reſt; but then 'twas, becauſe he was poſſeſt of a Sufficiency of Wiſdom and Goodneſs to govern his Thoughts with that Balance, as to ſecure himſelf from all their Inordinacies. But in laps'd Nature, the Caſe is otherwiſe: An unreſiſtible *Impetus* of Thoughts, is ſometimes inevitable; for there are two Principles in degenerate Man, of a contrary Genius, which poſſeſs his Principal Faculties, *Reaſon* (but this much debilitated) in his Mind, *Corruption* (tho' not without ſome Alloy) in his Will. In all Moral Eſſays of *Reaſon*, 'tis very much thwarted by Corruption, and even in its Speculations infinitely weakned and debaſed. The Will poſſeſſes a kind of Empire over the Mind, to excite, divert, direct, or determine Thoughts, and vary all their Circumſtances, by propoſal of Objects, *&c.* and ſometimes to give a *Superſedeas* to ſome kind of Thoughts, though not all; but oft it raiſes up ſuch Spirits, as it cannot conjure down, and very ſeldom has Dominion over the Matter or Subject of our Thoughts, to biaſs the Mind into ſuch Conceptions of Things, as it pleaſes, diſform, and diſſonant, from the Nature

ture of the Things themſelves, except where there is a more than ordinary Debauch, upon both Mind and Will. For the Reaſon of the *Subject*, muſt neceſſarily accord with the Reaſon of the *Object*, if there be any Truth in our Conceptions. Thoughts diſagreeing from Things, are Errours, and Deluſions. The Remainders therefore of Corruption in the Will, after its Renewal by Grace, together with a ſubtile *Tempter*, and ſometimes the *Holy Spirit of God* himſelf (as under Convictions of Sin) do excite ſuch Cogitations as are too hard for us, and bear down all the Supports of Nature, raiſing ſuch Tumults, and turbulent Affections, that our Spirits are ready to ſuccumb and ſink under them, into the moſt penſive Dumpiſhneſs, Dolour, Deſpair, Horror, and Confuſion. He is a Stranger to Himſelf, the World, the Scriptures, Chriſtianity, the Church, and particular Souls that know not this. If any will not yet believe it, I remit him to *Bedlam*, where his Senſe will convince him, what doleful Tragedies of this nature, have been, and are acted by *Amorous*, *Envious*, *Studious*, *Dolorous*, and *Religious Melancholy*, to omit other kinds. And what Man is there, that with any Senſe and Seriouſneſs, reflects upon his own particular Sins, againſt the *Holy Majeſty of Heaven*, in their odious Aggravations, together with the declared Diſpleaſure and Indignation, the menaced Wrath and Curſe of Almighty Vengeance againſt them, and his Perſon for their ſake; but will ſometimes find ſo great and oppreſſive Perturbations in his Mind and Conſcience, as to be utterly at a *Non-plus*, and ſcarce able to ſecure himſelf from Deſpondency? Who is there, that in ſome, either common or uncommon Calamity, or imminent Danger thereof, does not ſometimes

times find the Paſſions excited by his Thoughts, to be an Over-match for his Reaſon? Who but a ſenſeleſs ſtupid Log, does not a little ſometimes paſs the bounds of Decorum, in the Internal Workings of Sorrow, upon the Loſs or Death natural, but eſpecially ſuddain and violent of, or any conſiderable Croſſes in, and by deareſt and neareſt Relations, and yet more eſpecially when their immortal Souls are apparently hazzarded, if not finally loſt and ſunk into Eternal Damnation.

Now, no inward Affections are Self-movers, they neither do, nor can act, but upon the apprehenſion of Sence, or Motion of Thoughts, or Influence of ſome exterior very powerful Agent, that can make immediate Impreſſions upon the Blood and Spirits, as neither are our Thoughts, (no, nor can be) any Moleſtation or Affliction, but only as irritating our Paſſions. And I would gladly ſee the Man, who by Rational or Religious Conſiderations, has reduc'd his Thoughts and Paſſions to that equable Temperament, and Balance, that they neither are nor can be induc'd or impell'd, won, or wreſted into any Irregularity, or Exceſs, by the ſingle or united Powers of *Earth*, *Hell*, and *Heaven*; which laſt never depraves them, though it oft puniſhes us by them. Surely *Job* was a very good Man, yet the Extremity of his Afflictions provoked him to talk, and therefore think extravagantly. And if God Almighty caſt away the Reins out of his hands, and let looſe a Man's Thoughts upon him, (and who is there that gives him not a world of Provocation) I know not whither, even the moſt mere Man's Thoughts may not hurry him on this ſide Hell. If any deſire a full Conviction, what a wicked Man's Thoughts

Thoughts can do, let them a little survey those dismal Regions of Everlasting Horror (not in Person, as the poor Prisoner in *Alex. Genial. Dier. ab Alexandro, L. 6. C. 21.* but) in Thought and Meditation; and I hope it will do him this Good, *viz.* engage him to implore Omnipotent Grace, to Restrain and Govern his Thoughts, that they may not be an Introduction, and Earnest, of those easeless, endless, remediless Woes; and if his Thoughts thereof, will permit him to sleep or rest, before he hath done this, he thinks to little purpose.

*Lastly*, Behold the infinite Condescension and Care of Heaven, towards impotent degenerous Man, in the Provision made, not only for his Necessity, but Consolation. Rather than our Thoughts should be too many, and so an Over-match for us, the *Divine Goodness* will interpose and relieve us, and has exhibited such a full Treasury of Comforts, that no Distress can befal us so uncouth, so uncommon, so inextricable, as to be out of the reach and road of the Relief therein tendered us. That so inconsiderable a Piece, as a Sinner, a Pourtraicture of Hell, limn'd after the Image of Satan, (the Father of all Wickedness) an Enemy thro' natural depravement, to God and Goodness, should engage the Solicitude and Providence of Heaven, in such admirable instances, to retrieve its lost Happiness, and recover it out of the Sink and Abyss of Filth and Wretchedness, that it may be set aloft in the *Galleries of Glory*, and be beautified in, rather than beautifie, the Presence-Chamber of the *King* of *Kings*: This, this is a wonder beyond the Dimension of all other Miracles, to be ascrib'd to the Benignity and Efficiency of nothing Inferiour to Infiniteness. Men may flatter themselves in their

their ſweet Harangues concerning the Celſitude, Dignity, and Nobleneſs of Humane Nature, let it in its poſitive State as the effect of a moſt excellent Cauſe, be advanc'd, and admir'd as much as it can, by Words or Thoughts, yet what is it comparatively to God? What is it under the debaſements of Sin? Which is infinitely more odious to God, than any thing ſhort of Himſelf, can be pleaſing; ſo that nothing leſs than Divinity, could give Satisfaction for the Wrong it did to the Supreme *Majeſty of Heaven*; not all the natural Excellencies of the whole Creation, not all the Moral Perfections and Performances of Men and Angels; and what Account is to be made of a drop of Honey, intermingled with an Ocean of Gall? The ever Adoreable Son of God, who was much more a Man, in reſpect of all eximious humane Endowments, than ever any born of Woman (beſides his Sinleſsneſs) yet in the Perſon of *David* ſaith of himſelf, *Pſal.* 22. 6. 4. *I am a Worm and no Man*, (if that be not to be underſtood eſtimatively, that he was no better in the account of his Reproachers, that *ſhaked the Head at him, ſaying he truſted in the Lord*, &c. compare this with *Matth.* 27. 39. 43. See alſo *Pſal.* 8. 4, 5, 6. *Heb.* 2. 6, *&c.* In *Job* 25. 6. Man is conſidered with reſpect to that which does moſt of all ennoble, *viz. Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs:* Yet (becauſe 'tis allay'd with the Mixture of many Imperfections, and Miſcarriages, and Pollutions, by reaſon whereof he ſtands in need of *Pardon and Juſtification*, that he cannot inſiſt upon it, as capable of rendring his Perſon and Actions in ſtrict Juſtice acceptable to, or allowable by the Righteous Judge of Quick and Dead) *Bildad* there will admit him to ſtand in no higher Rank than that of a Worm, when any thing

in

in him aſpires to a Competition with God; as indeed, there's no Proportion betwixt Finite and Infinite. And that *the High and Lofty One that inhabits Eternity*, ſhould humble and debaſe Himſelf, to engage ſo admirably for ſo minute a Being, make Proviſion ſo incomparably rich and glorious for a vile Worm, is a Work of unparallell'd Bounty, and Magnificence, congruous and anſwerable to the immenſe *Perfection of God*, but infinitely above the Merit and Meanneſs of Man.

Comfort! 'Tis a comprehenſive, an incomprehenſible Bleſſing, like Him who *Gives it*, who *Is* it. All that God hath done, ſtill doth, and intends to do, is implied in it, or may be inferr'd from it. All the eternal good Purpoſes of the Divine Majeſty, for the Benefit of Man, the whole Undertaking and Purchaſe of His Well-beloved Son, every of the Gifts, Graces, and Workings of the *Holy Spirit*, are ſumm'd up here. For a Man is not capable of actual Comfort, till he enjoy Aſſurance, as hath been evinced, nor of aſſurance, till he be *Juſtified* and *Sanctified*; nor of theſe, without the *Spirit of Grace*, nor of that without the *Mediation of Chriſt*; nor is he capable of *Eternal Comfort*, till he enjoy all theſe in their Fulneſs. This one Mercy therefore is *All*; becauſe where *It* is given, *All* are given before or with it, and it is given as the Fruit of *All*; the Beſtowal of it, being the conſummate Act of Divine Munificence. In Summ, Comfort in part, is part of Heaven; perfect Comfort, is perfect Heaven. Oh aſtoniſhing Grace! Oh unimitable *Goodneſs* in the Donor! Oh unlimitable Bleſſedneſs in the Poſſeſſor! *Oh what is man, Lord, that thou art thus mindful of him, or the ſon of man, that thou doſt thus viſit him!* Erect thy ſelf, Oh my Soul, into an admiring Contemplation,

plation, of this Deſcent of *Majeſty*, ſo ſtupendous, ſo benign, ſo beneficial. Refreſh thy Thoughts with it daily: Let it dwell with thee; Reſolve, and endeavour to endear to thy ſelf, that infinite Goodneſs, which ſo incredibly humbles it ſelf, for thy advantage. Improve it for that end; for if this Meditation do not Better thee, thou wilt be worſe for it to all Eternity.

## CHAP. XVI.

### *Elenctical Inferences.*

NExt I have Deductions of Two Sorts, according to the Signification of the Word [ἔλεγχος] *Convictive and Reprehenſive.* The *Convictive*, are either *Theoretical*, or *Practical*, concerning *Faith* or *Conſcience.*

This Firſt confutes and condemns the Doctrine of *Incertitude*; or the Impugners of Aſſurance: For if in this Life there be *Comfort*, there muſt be *Aſſurance.* The Latter is neither Poſſible, nor Rational, without the former: Which is thus proved.

*Divine Actual Comfort*, being that Satisfaction, Eaſe, Quiet, and Peace of *Mind* and *Conſcience*, which ſettles our diſcompoſed, diſcompoſing, troubleſome Thoughts and Affections, into a ſweet Harmony and Reſt, cannot poſſibly be a brutiſh ſtupidity of Conſcience, but muſt proceed upon Light and Evidence: For God does not act upon us as Blocks and Stones, which have no Faculties or Senſe to guide them, but only an *Obediential Power* in a paſſive way, to yield to the Conduct of His Wiſdom and Omnipotence. He does not ſtill

and becalm our tempeſtuous Hearts, as the Sea, which knows not what it does, when it ſubmits to the uncontroulable Violence of His Commands. No, He leads our Rational Powers in the ſweet Method of their ſpontaneous natural activity into the Paths of *Righteouſneſs*, which iſſue in *Peace*, *Jam.* 3. 18. Which is therefore call'd *Guiding*, *Luk.* 1. 77, 78, 79. *To give the Knowledge of Salvation to his People*, [ἐν ἀφέσει] *in the taking away of their Sins*, (whether by Remiſſion or Sanctification, or both) 78. [Διὰ σπάγχνα ἐλέους] *By* [*or through*] *the Bowels of Mercy of our God*, [ἐν οἷς] *in which, the Day-ſpring*, [*Sun-riſe*, Mal. 4. 2. ἀνατελῶ, *Eaſt*, Mat. 2. 1, 2. ἀνατολὴ] *from on high hath viſited us.* 79. Ἐπιφᾶναι [*to make an Epiphany, to ſhine forth*;] *To give Light to them that ſit in Darkneſs, and the ſhadow of Death*, [τοῦ κατευθῦναι, *to ſtreighten*,] *to guide, ſtreight, our feet into the way of Peace.* A pregnant Scripture for my Purpoſe. *Peace*, then there can be none that's *Solid* and *Divine*, (of which alone we enquire) out *of the way of Peace.* We cannot, when *ſitting in darkneſs and the ſhadow of Death, ſtumble*, or hit into that way, without a *Guide.* No other Guide can there be, but the *Sun of Righteouſneſs, the Day-ſpring viſiting us.* Without Light, He neither can nor will be our *Guide.* This *Light* from the *Day-ſpring*, is no other than the *Knowledge of Salvation, in the taking away of Sins*, which when particularly apply'd to my ſelf, is only this, *I know that I ſhall obtain Salvation*, by this, *viz. the taking away of my Sins*, and that's neither more nor leſs, than *Aſſurance*; all which Bleſſings accrue to us, *through the Bowels of Mercy of our God.*

'Tis not poſſible that a Man's Conſcience ſhould be truly comforted, except he know that Comfort apper-

appertains to him, is his right. For though the Contemplation of Golden Mountains may gratifie the Imagination of a Fool, yet no wise Man counts himself richer for a dream of the *Spanish Silver Mines* in *Potosi*, &c. or the *Golden Tagus*, or *Rio de Plata*. That *Athenian* is upon Record for no *Philosopher*, who solac'd himself with a conceit that all the Ships arriving at the Port were his own. Sound Peace of Mind is always founded upon good Evidence of an undoubted Right to Peace. For if I doubt that I deceive mine own Soul, in speaking *Peace* to my self, *where there is no Peace*; that very dubiousness will rack and torture me, as much as (possibly more than) I should have been, had I never claim'd Peace; since an usurpation of what I have no title to, is a new sin superadded to the old sore of *Soul-disquieters*, and the very fear that I am guilty of it hath Torment. Now I cannot possibly be assur'd that Comfort belongs to me of right, unless I find within my self the dispositions that qualifie for Comfort; that is, except I be consolable, I cannot be comforted. If I be not agreeable to Comfort, it is not agreeable to me. For the right to Comfort is not Absolute but Conditional. 'Tis not Nature that entitles to it but Grace; therefore in all the Epistolary Salutations, 'tis first *Grace*, then *Peace*. Whence a Man can be no more assured that he hath right to Comfort, than he is assured he hath true Grace. And Experience demonstrates, that a Person, if he understand himself, to be absolutely inconsolable, who cannot be satisfied, that he hath really performed the Conditions of the Covenant of Grace, as far as is necessary to found a present right to the Blessings of that Covenant. Doubt

of this, and doubt of all. I must have good and sound Evidence of this, or I build upon Sand. Imaginary Grace will only introduce imaginary Right, therefore none but an imaginary Peace. The Superstructure can be no more firm and stable than the Foundation. Whence it being impossible to be really Comforted, without a sound perswasion of Right, and impossible to be certain of right without certainty of the truth of Grace, it follows that Comfort is not possible without Assurance. Therefore not rational. 'Tis a very imprudent part in a Man to *speak Peace to himself*, when God does proclaim open War; absolute madness to arrest Divine Consolations, when it is Indispensible Duty, to apply and meditate Terror, to bless himself with appropriating Promises, when his Condition is palpably under the Threatning, and he either knows it or has just reason to suspect it. There's no middle state between Sanctified and Unsanctified, Pardoned and Unpardoned. If a Man know that he is Unjustified, yet assume to himself the Comfort of the Promises, he presumes senslesly and sottishly to give the lye to *God*. Let such read and consider *Deut.* 29.18,19,20, *&c.* If any doubt of his Pardon, yet apply Comfort, he gives his Conscience the *go-by*, and makes fair weather in despite of *Heaven*. In short, Peace of Conscience cannot possibly arise from any other scource, than *Conscience of a State Frame and Way acceptable to God*. If I have no motives to conciliate a Credibility to this, and yet will solace my self, and cast off all trouble, care and fear, hush the storm within, compose the rouling Waves, and settle; 'tis but upon the Lees, the Mire and Dirt, and too much a Token and Testi-

mony

mony of Madneſs, Drunkenneſs or Searedneſs of Conſcience.

The 2d. Part of the Conviction concerns *Conſcience*, which 'tis as neceſſary to eſtabliſh as the Mind. Truth and Sincerity in the Heart being as momentous and conſiderable as Truth in the Head or Underſtanding.

Humane (nay all ſublunary) Nature is fond of Eaſe and Reſt, and entertains all Perturbations with reluctancy and dolour; but above all trouble of Mind and Conſcience is moſt uneaſie, Comfort and Peace moſt natural, agreeable, and grateful. *Prov.* 18. 14. and 17. 22. and 12. 25. and 15. 13. Hence every one would and will, (if it be poſſible) live in ſome kind of Peace. But 'tis the unhappineſs of the Generality through ignorance, inconſideration and greedineſs of Reſt, to ſnatch at the mere ſhadow, and ſo that they may but be free from Pain, and the dreadful Convulſions and Cramps of Conſcience, matter not whether it be through Sleep, Numbneſs, Stupefaction, or Death. But this is not to be accounted Peace, any more than a Swoon is Reſt. 'Tis really a Diſeaſe the *Lethargy of Conſcience*; out of which when it awakes in this or another World, 'tis tortured with the cruelеſt Pangs, ſtung and rack'd with the moſt direful Anguiſh and Agonies imaginable. It therefore is of no little conſequence to know, whether our Comfort be genuine, that we dream not our ſelves into deeper Woes, in the embraces of falſe and fallacious Joys. Let our Conſciences therefore ſee to it that they be not put off with Phantaſms and Illuſions, inſtead of ſolid Conſolations. Seeing then there is a World of adulterine cozening Peace, what may be the

*Criteria*, the distinctive *Characteristicks* of true and false Comfort.

They differ,

1. In their Origin, or Rise and Antecedents,
2. In their Attendants or Company,
3. In their Subject, and the condition of the Persons.
4. In their Effects and Tendency.

1. Carnal Comfort springs out of Security, Spiritual out of Sense. An impenitent Sinner is at quiet in his Mind, either because he never knew the deplorable Wretchedness and Wickedness of his Natural State, or never would know it, or because knowing it and being frighted therewith, he takes a sinister method to conjure down the sense and terror of it; either murdering Convictions by diverting his Thoughts, Cares, Course and Conduct, as the Prophane; or stopping the Mouth of Conscience by entering into the *road of Religion*, as do the *Hypocrites*, when yet there's something that passes Judgment underneath, and whispers to them that all is not right, and justifiable before God, whatever their shows may be before Men. Or if through blindness of Mind or Self-flattery they have arriv'd to that depth of Delusion, as to deceive their own Souls, and being accustomed to collogue with God, are left by him to believe a lye, (as 'tis just for those that mock God with shadows, to be permitted to feed thereon themselves, and to be imposed upon by that whereby they attempt to impose upon their Maker) they live in a Calm, and die in a Mist, not knowing where they are till they feel themselves in Hell.

But

But theſe are perverſe, prepoſterous Methods to Peace, which will iſſue in a more deſtructive War and Confuſion. True Comfort grows out of, and in the midſt of Thoughts, *multitude of Thoughts, which affect the Heart with godly Sorrow*: Such I ſcruple not to call that of the *Pſalmiſt*'s, which the Context exhibits, and the Text implies under the notion of *Branchings*, here rendred *Thoughts*, but which no leſs includes the *Affections*, and every thing which iſſues from the Soul as the Bough from the Tree; beſide that his Trouble, and therefore *Grief*, did mainly reſpect the publick Intereſt of the *Church*, *Religion* and *God*. This was the Harbinger of his Joy. And that Comfort is of this Lineage, appears by many Scriptures, as *Pſal.* 112. 4. *Unto the upright there ariſeth Light in Darkneſs. Only thoſe that ſow in Tears, ſhall reap in Joy*, Pſal. 126. 5, 6. *Ye ſhall weep and lament, but the World ſhall rejoyce, and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy*, Joh. 16. 20. See alſo *Iſa.* 57. 18. and 61. 2, 3. *Matth.* 5. 4. If there be not firſt troubled Thoughts, Comfort will neither be ſought, given nor valu'd. The moſt take no thought about their Condition and Comfort, yet are at eaſe, becauſe they never engage their thinking Powers; ſo the ſenſeleſs, careleſs, wicked ones; the reſt of Men who ſleep in the ſoft Bed of patch'd formal Religion, and dream themſelves into carnal Security, (as the Phariſaical) never think thorowly. Their Thoughts are a lively Emblem of their Devotions, or theſe of them; all ſuperficial, nothing ſolid and to good purpoſe.

A Man is only that in Religion, which his Thoughts are. Home Thoughts, that go to the bottom of things, and repreſent them as they

are, and go to the bottom of the Heart, and touch it to the quick; make a Man ſound and ſerious in Soul concerns. But overly Cogitations only paint the outſide, and form a pretty Picture of a Saint, do not renew and reform within, where the Eye of God looks for a more eminent Comelyneſs and Glory, *Pſal.* 45. 13. Such Thoughts may poſſibly lick and ſleek over the Affections, and give them a Face, but cannot give them Life; and where our Sorrows are not a living Spring, they will never iſſue in other than dead Contents and Joys. Thoſe Thoughts that never warm and melt the Heart, do but terminate in cold Comfort. If they do not mould, and faſhion, and frame our Souls aright, as the Potter does his Clay, we ſhall never be Veſſels of Honour to be repleniſhed with divine Conſolations.

Oh then, my Soul, where are thy piercing heart-wounding Reflections? Will the All-wiſe God be ſo profuſe of his medicinal healing Balms, as to apply them waſt where there are no Sores? Can the all-knowing Phyſician of Souls be ſo indiſcreet, as prodigally to conſume and ſpend his reviving Cordials, where neither *the Head is ſick, nor the Heart faint?* Do no mollifying Conſiderations diſtil down as the dew upon the Rock beneath, to ſupple it into a repenting tenderneſs? Doſt thou never aſcend in thy Meditations to the third Heaven, and take a deliberate view of thoſe yerning Bowels of Commiſeration which did compaſs thee about, when in thy Blood, with the reſt of Mankind, devoted to everlaſting Deſtruction, upon account of thy violation (in *Adam*) of the *Covenant of Nature?* Does not God's Eternal Love, which was its own motive to eſtabliſh that Heaven and Earth-aſtoniſhing Occonomy of Grace, for thy

thy reſtitution to a condition of Hope and Happineſs, ſometimes ſolicit and invite thy ſerious Cogitations to dwell upon it till it thorowly inſinuate it ſelf into thy inmoſt Receſſes, and with a gentle fervour thaw thy frozen Affections, and ſoften thee into godly Sorrow. Art thou hardened againſt the powerful impreſſions of that admirable Grace? Behold then further in *Golgotha*, a ſpectacle that would regele and diſſolve even Eyes of Flint, and intenerate a Heart all Rock of *Adamant*. Oh behold thy panting, groaning, bleeding, dying, Redeemer, the ever-bleſſed Son of God, breathing out his oppreſſed Soul, under the burthen of thy Curſe, to procure for thee an Inheritance of everlaſting Bleſſedneſs. This, O this is a melting ſight indeed. Did the very Rocks relent, and rent aſunder, the palſied Earth deveſt its obſtinate natural ſtableneſs, and as if there had been a luxation of all its Ligaments, compoſe it ſelf into a tremulous Palpitation; and the very face of Nature it ſelf put on Sack-cloath, gather Blackneſs, enwrap it ſelf in a Mourning dreſs, and envelop all its Glories in a noonday night, upon that fatal Eclipſe of the Glory of both the viſible and inviſible World, *the Sun of Righteouſneſs*, that the *Philoſopher* did not without good reaſon infer, upon the Contemplation thereof, that it imported either *the God of Natures Paſſion, or its verging towards a Diſſolution?* And ſhall that which overcomes all the repugnances of Nature, find and leave thee a piece of the nether Milſtone, with a pervicacious ſtubbornneſs hardening thy ſelf againſt Sorrow? In a compaſſionate regard of thy wretchedneſs, he did then by ſtrength of Love bow the Heavens, that he might come down, humbling

*Pſal* 144. 5. *Iſa* 64. 1.

his

his Deity to embrace thy beggarly Humanity; but Oh! Whither wilt thou fly for Sanctuary, when he ſhall break and burn down all, at his return in the flaming Severity and Vengeance of an impartial Judge, to render Recompences even to thee amongſt the reſt of impenitent Rebels? If he find thee ſuch, what Rock (more impenetrable than thy ſelf) wilt thou ſearch out to cover thee? *When the Heavens being on fire ſhall*
2 *Pet.* 3. *be diſſolved, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat*, What ſhelter canſt thou meet with as indiſſoluble as thy brawny Heart, that in a contumacious pertinacy has ſo long ſtood out againſt all the choiceſt methods of Divine Goodneſs to diſſolve thee, to reclaim thee? Wilt thou conſider, or wilt thou not? Shall thy thoughts draw out thoſe penitential Waters that will return in a tyde of Joys? Haſt thou ever been oppreſt with the thoughts of thy Sins, thy Ungodlineſs, thy Worldly Luſts, thy Pride, Paſſion, Selfiſhneſs, Earthlineſs, Unbelief, Lukewarmneſs, Hypocriſie, Cuſtomarineſs of Spirit in holy Performances, or omiſſion of them, *&c.* and perſeverance in theſe Evils, and the like againſt the Dictates of Conſcience, Convictions of the Spirit, Warnings of Providence, *by a hard and impenitent Heart, treaſuring up Wrath,*
*Rom.* 2. 5. *againſt the day of Wrath, and Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God?* Will neither the thoughts of Love and Heaven engage thee, nor of Wrath and Hell affright thee into Seriouſneſs? Oh the damnable obduracy and unconcernedneſs of an unrenewed Heart, that neither Life nor Death, though Eternal, neither Felicity nor Miſery, though Unfathomable, can prevail upon, not to be willing, and take the ready

ready method, to be unutterably miſerable, till the lamentable experience and feeling of the one eternally, do utterly extinguiſh all hopes of the other, except Almighty Power, to introduce *Repentance*, create ſuch bitter and ſenſible foretaſts, that with *Heman*, *Pſal.* 88. 15. 'tis ready to groan out, ſuffering thy Terrors, *I am diſtracted, thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off.* For 'twill be a wonder if any thing leſs prevail with it *to fly from the Wrath to come*, Matth. 3. 7.

Did thy thoughts, Oh my Soul, never affect thee with theſe and the like things, as the greateſt Realities, matters of Senſe not of mere Speculation? Haſt thou never been ſick and ſore through the plague of thine Heart? Art thou whole without a Phyſician? Haſt thou never a Spiritual Wound, or want, to force and drive thee out of thy ſelf? Seeſt thou never a divine lovely Perfection, a ſuitable attractive Excellency in Chriſt to draw thee? In ſhort, haſt thou never entertain'd any feeling Conſiderations of the true way to Comfort? Never ſtudied that courſe and procedure of Divine Goodneſs, whereby he leads to it? Never entred in at the *ſtrait Gate of Repentance*, which alone admits into the Manſion of thoſe unfading Joys? Haſt thou never got thy native Blindneſs of Mind, in ſome good degree heal'd by the Spiritual Eye-ſalve of Heaven? The diguſts of thy Spiritual Palate remedied by a ſavoury reliſhing taſte of the ſweetneſs of the Truth as it is in *Jeſus*? Thy connatural rockineſs diſſolved, by the ſoftening influences of the Spirit of Conviction and Contrition? If not thus, I like it not, thy Peace I fear is naught, away with it, 'twill end in Confuſion. But if thy

thoughts

thoughts be deep and powerful, and have thy Heart at command: If thou weigh and conſider with all ſerioufneſs and deliberation the neceſſity of being qualified aright for Peace, and the danger of preſuming thy Conſcience into a calm ceſſation, under a ſtate of Enmity to God; that for thy life thou dareſt not entertain a jot of Comfort, further than thy Light, Spirit, and Condition can be fully reconciled to it, and freely admit it, upon a full and thorow pondering all Circumſtances, and examining thy Heart, ſearching thy Conſcience to the bottom; becauſe as much affraid of being abuſed by *Satan*, and Self-flattery into a falſe Peace, as ambitious of, and in love with a true: If thou reflect upon thoſe Sorrows which are introductory to Spiritual Joys, to enquire whether they be of the right Model, what Image and Superſcription of God there is upon them, and with infinite care and endeavour ſtrive to rectifie whatever is amiſs therein, whether reſpecting their Object, Motive, or End, that thou mayſt not take the left Hand way, but the right, by weeping Croſs to Comfort, ſtill renewing thy Griefs for their own failures, till the real Effects demonſtrate them to be indeed *according to God:* If thou canſt not be ſatisfied till Sin, as Sin, an offence againſt God, truly break thy very Heart, and work it into an ingenuous tenderneſs, that the warm Boſom of everlaſting Love thaw thy frozen Affections, and with its ſweet and gentle Impulſe and Influence, melt the flinty Rock within, and pour it down in Penitential Showrs, that not mere Self-love, which engages Grief in a fear of Wrath, and deſire of Indemnity; nor mere Natural Conſcience, acting upon

2 *Cor.* 7. 9, 10, 11.

upon Rational Principles without reſpect to God, may draw out thy Sorrows; but thy diſingenuous, unworthy, baſe carriage, to ſo kind, tender, affectionate, every way amiable and obliging a Father, may diſſolve thee into repentant Groans and Dolours; if thou take as much pains, that thy Penitence may be ſincere, as thou cheriſheſt deſire, that thy Peace may be ſweet, and ſure, and under the conduct of this endeavour feel any Revivings; theſe are the Comforts of God.

2. True and falſe Comforts differ in their Attendants, or Company. Sound Peace is always attended with War and watchfulneſs againſt Sin, and a ſincere delight in God and *Goodneſs*. As in the *Pſalmiſt*, How afraid was he of ſlipping? What a ſingular reſpect did he bear to God, whom he owns in every thing, and to all intents and purpoſes, as *his God, his Defence, his Rock of Refuge, his upholder*, &c. Contrarily falſe Joys are at Peace with Sin, and have little or no reſpect for God or Holineſs: However there's nothing cordial there, all's but pretence and Phantaſtry. A ſetled courſe of Sin; Love to any one Omiſſion or Commiſſion; Servitude to Sin, are utterly inconſiſtent with the *Peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding*. For this *keeps watchfully both Mind and Heart, as with a guard and Garriſon*, Phil. 4. 7. Therefore true Peace always lives in a ſtate of War; there's an Enemy in proſpect, What need of a Guard where no danger? The Foes that immediately aſſault the *Mind and Heart*, are *Error and Sin*; theſe are the *Sting the Strength of the old Dragon*, who can harm us by nothing elſe; theſe batter down our Defences, make breaches in our Walls, bury our Peace in Rubbiſh and Ruins: Which therefore only lives, when it fortifies *Verſ.* 12. *Verſ.* 18.

fortifies and ſecures againſt theſe; but if they prevail it certainly and inevitably dies, and is incapable of a Reſurrection, till Sovereign Grace renew us to *Repentance*; beating down our Corruptions, and reviving our decayed Graces, that we begin with new Life and livelineſs, to ſtrive againſt Evil, and to do good; which the Scripture enjoyns under the Metaphor of entring into, and in at the little preſſed, narrow, or ſtrait way and Gate.

God will not loſe this precious Seed of Peace, by ſowing it among Weeds or Thorns, or Rocks, or common Roads: A good and honeſt Heart only receives it, keeps it, and is kept by it. He that hath really felt the bitterneſs of enmity with God, as every one muſt ere he be ſolac'd with a ſenſe of his Love; cannot eaſily be reconciled to his own woe, or return to the filthy Vomit that brings it. For War with Heaven is Hell; where pure unmixed Juſtice acts againſt Sinners, according to the demerit of their Sins, and without Intermiſſion or Mitigation; and Sinners act againſt God, with the full and unreſtrained bent for their Wills, without regret or rebuke of Conſcience, for the Sins there committed; though under the deepeſt Agonies, and moſt diſmal Remordencies of Conſcience for the Sins committed here. And if the higheſt degree of this Enmity be the loweſt Abyſs of Miſery, all inferiour degrees muſt neceſſarily in the ſame proportion, partake of the ſame Nature, and retain as much of the latter, as they do of the former; and an Ounce of Mercury is Poyſon as well as a Pound. I know there are *Mountebanks* in Religion, that dare adventure to drink down a Toad, in confidence of an *Orvietan* or *Antidote*; but that had need be ſure (which yet

is

is impoſſible) that this Preſervative be not in the Power of an Enemy, who hath liberty and authority to withhold it at pleaſure, even in their extremeſt Neceſſity, elſe they certainly ſwallow their own (as to themſelves) remedileſs Damnation. If Men take the boldneſs to ſin upon preſumption, that Repentance and the Merit of Chriſt will ſecure them; who yet may be fully aſſured, that both are ſolely the gift of God, whom by their confident and daring impudence herein, they infinitely diſoblige and irritate; they for a while after this ſweet Figg, may enjoy the content of a little rotting eaſe, but the Poyſon is ſecretly inſinuating it ſelf into their Vitals, and corrupting them with ſo malignant a Contagion, as renders their Diſeaſe the more incurable, and their eternal Perdition inevitable. He that is in love with ſuch Comfort as this, may take it, much good may it do him, if it can; but I fear he will never have Joy of it in another World.

We dread that which hath once burnt us. Ask a wounded Spirit, what eaſe there is in rebelling againſt Heaven, and what Satisfaction it can hope for in that ſtate of War, and how in its preſent circumſtances it can reliſh all thoſe ſenſual Joys, where-from it once receiv'd ſo much ſeeming Contentation? Oh now, they are Wormwood and Gall, and create in Reflection as much anguiſh and torment, as ever they did comfort in Fruition. The *Honey* is gone, the *Sting* remains; the Pleaſure is vaniſh'd, the Pain emerges, and will endure till a thorow Penitence, and unfeigned Faith, introduce a ſenſe of Reconciliation with God, that it becomes as clear and evident, that the Enmity in our minds againſt God, and God's Enmity againſt us

*Rom.* 6. 21.

us is aboliſhed, as before it was plain, that there had been no good underſtanding betwixt us. For, how can an enlightned Conſcience be quiet till it be ſatisfied, that it ſtands upon good terms with its *Sovereign Lord*? If its fears build upon the old bottom, *viz.* a perſwaſion that omnipotent Wrath is arming againſt it; how can it be at reſt? To be patient under this, much more to be content, moſt of all to be pleaſed and Jovial, is bruti∫h ſtupidity and ſenſeleſneſs, or deſperate foolhardineſs and madneſs; which can iſſue in nothing but the everlaſting torturous Senſe, and Plagues of Hell, if boundleſs Mercy prevent not, by a ſound awakening, and Converſion. There cannot then be any Divine Comfort, if there be not a ſweet Compoſure and Harmony betwixt Earth and Heaven; and this can never be where a Man is at peace with his Sins: Therefore whatever quiet may ſeem to be in ſuch a Soul, 'tis only perſonated and illuſive; it reaches not to the real bottom of the trouble, takes not out the Core.

But on the other hand, when a Man makes Repentance, and Mortification, Faith, and a good Life the main employ, which drinks up his Spirits, and Strength, and Time; induſtriouſly contending, in all things to approve the ſincerity and heartineſs of his Affections, Deſigns, and Aims, and whole Deportment in the ſight of God; and whilſt he is thus doing, finds any quietude Reſt and Satisfaction of Mind to ſweeten his Work, and ſettle his Conſcience; he may be confident that this is the true Comfort of the *Holy Ghoſt*. For as 'tis impoſſible to enjoy true Peace under reigning Sin, ſo tis inconſiſtent with *Divine Goodneſs, and Federal Love* to permit a true Heart, intirely devoted to him, to delude it ſelf into true Miſeries, under the

the vizor of falſe Joys. I confeſs, if a Man be too greedy of Comfort, and too haſty in his Applications, without due conſideration, and indeavour, and care to derive his Satisfactions from ſolid Grounds, laying the ſtreſs upon things which will not bear it; in ſuch indeliberate precipitation of Judgment, concerning a Mans ſtate, and the true root of Comfort, when he founds it upon any thing leſs than ſubſtantial *Piety*, *Righteouſneſs* and *Sobriety*, as the evidence of his Right; he may abuſe himſelf with an unſound, unſolid Peace. Therefore I always ſuppoſe that the procedure, in order to Comfort be juſtifiable, and the Grounds upon which a Man bottoms his Evidence be genuine, and that his reaſon and judgment lead him leiſurely in the Scripture way, to Heart-eaſe and Reſt; elſe all may iſſue in greater inquietude and trouble, whatever fair Weather may at preſent flatter his conſcience. But if Spiritual ſenſe, light and a ſerious Preponderation of all circumſtances, according to the preceeding particular, direct our motions hither, and true Religiouſneſs confirm them; we may be ſecure, that mere Shows and Pageantry do not now delude us into a Fairy Paradiſe. A weak Head, 'tis true, may lead an honeſt Heart into a deceitful Peace. And 'tis not the deſign of Grace to aboliſh or reform the natural Depravations and Deformities of our Faculties ſo much as the Moral: But that which is defective muſt not be made a *Standard*. A good Soul that underſtands it ſelf and obſerves ſolid Rules, in comforting it ſelf, cannot be deceiv'd in that Peace which it poſſeſſes, whilſt it loves God and keeps his way. Such as a Mans goodneſs is, will his Conſolation be. If that be but External and Hypocritical, this will be inſincere and deluſory; but

a true intelligent, honeſt Heart, proceeding with a juſt caution, ſhall never be gull'd with a *Mock-Peace.* For, *Pſal.* 97. 11, 12. *Light is ſown for the Righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart. Rejoyce in the Lord, ye Righteous.* What God ſows, they ſhall reap. *Pſal.* 85. 8, 10. *I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak, for he will ſpeak peace unto his people, and to his Saints,* &c. *Mercy and Truth have met together, Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other.* Their embrace is ſtrict and indiſſoluble; God hath eſpouſed them, they cannot be divorced. *What he hath joyned together, none ſhall finally ſeparate and part aſunder.* They give mutual teſtimony each to others integrity and ſoundneſs. *In Life they are lovely, in Death they cannot be divided, but will cohabit eternally.*

Where then, Oh my Soul, is thy *Righteouſneſs,* not particular meerly, but univerſal? *Shew me thy comfort by thy Works, for 'tis dead being alone. As the Body without the Spirit is dead, ſo is Peace without Holineſs,* which is its very Life and Soul. If thou be not *God-like,* thy Joys are not *Heaven-like.* All true pleaſures are drops of thoſe *Rivers at God's Right Hand,* Pſal. 36. 8. and 46. 4. and 16. ult. If the *Waters of Life* have never quickned and cleanſed thee, thoſe Streams of Divine Comfort never yet did refreſh thee; thou haſt only drunk of the *Abana* and *Pharphar* of muddy, carnal Contentments, not of the pure Fountain of Celeſtial Conſolations. Wherein then can thy uprightneſs, and real honeſty of heart approve it ſelf to God? *Is this thy rejoycing,* 2 Cor. 1. 12. *viz.* the *Teſtimony of thy conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the grace of God, thou haſt had thy Converſation in the World.* What haſt thou to ſhew more than an Hypocrite?

Where-

Wherein does thy *Righteouſneſs* excel that of *Scribes* and *Phariſees*? What are thy Principles, Motives, manner of acting, Aims and Ends, in thy whole courſe of Life? Do'ſt thou really act, 1. From God, a Spirit of new Life, breathed into thee by God. 2. Through Chriſt, as the Foundation of thy hopes of acceptance. 3. By the Spirit, as thy immediate aid in every Holy performance. 4. Unto God, as thy ultimate end. Haſt thou no ſecret reſerved *Dalilahs*? No one thing in which thou would'ſt have liberty, and preſume upon Pardon: Do'ſt thou not run upon a biaſs in Religion, and twine aſide in ſome ſiniſter reſpect to ſelf, or the popular Vogue, in which thou would'ſt be ſomebody? Is it thy great and uppermoſt care and ſtudy to be true to him that ſees in ſecret, rather than applauded by thoſe who only ſee the *Outſide*; that thy inward gracious *Diſpoſitions* may go no leſs than thy outward *Semblances*? Art thou above all things jealous of thy deceitful Heart, afraid of *Hypocriſie*; willing to do any thing that may tend to a full diſcovery of thy ſelf, to thy ſelf? And if all be not right within, or ſuſpected not to be, Art thou unſpeakably troubled till it be righted? Thou art full of thoughts, but have thy Meditations been effectual through Chriſt, to break thy heart from, as well as for ſin, and bow thy Will to a Conformity, and ſubjection to *God's Will of Precept and Providence*, and bring thee to an intelligent, ſelf-denying, humble, penitent, believing, affectionate owning thy *Baptiſmal Covenant*, in its whole latitude, with ſincere and indeflexible Reſolutions to ſtand by it for ever? And do'ſt thou expect thy peace in no other way? Haſt thou been induſtriouſly and labouriouſly diligent, to gain a true and thorow

underſtanding of thy State, and Frame Godward, ſearching all to the bottom; very ſolicitous to ſee in a clear light? What Conditions and Qualifications are prerequiſite to diſpoſe thee for Comfort, and to be clear, that in reality they are in thee, and that thou do'ſt not build thy Evidence hereof upon ſelf-flattering, deceitful Grounds, but do'ſt in truth find, that the intereſt of God is Soveraign and Supreme in, and neareſt thy Heart, hath the univerſal Regiment and command over all, being thy ſingular delight; and whatever thou feel'ſt to oppoſe, becomes on that account an intolerable burthen, thy daily lamentation? Thou dareſt not aſſume to thy ſelf any comfort, nor be at reſt in thy Spirit, till thou beeſt in ſome good degree ſatisfied, that *God and goodneſs* have (as far as Humane Infirmity, and this preſent ſtate will permit) the *all of thy Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength*, or thy moſt earneſt, preſſing, active, induſtrious, perſevering deſires hereof; which not to feel is a grief and torment inſupportable, and drives thee to new exerciſes of *Repentance and Faith in Chriſt* for *Pardon* and Aid, that thy ſecond endeavours may be more upright, thy after thoughts more efficacious: And do'ſt thou ſeek and find eaſe and reſt for thy ſelf in no other method, than *looking and coming to Jeſus, with a weary, labouring, heavy-laden Heart*, entirely devoted to him, and therefore ſincerely willing and deſirous to *learn of him meekneſs and lowlineſs of Heart, and to take his Yoak upon thee, which is eaſie, and his Burthen which is light*, Matt. 11. 29, 30. If this be thy frame, practice, and way, and thou canſt not, wilt not comfort thy ſelf, till thy ſenſe and real feeling of theſe things, and a full inſight into thy ſelf, make thy way very plain, as infinitely afraid of being cheated

ed by Satan, or chouſed by thine own deceitful Heart, under a ſhadow of Spiritual Joys, into ſubſtantial Woes. If thy Feet being firſt guided into the paths of Righteouſneſs, be guided alſo with this caution and warineſs, into the way of Peace, and ſetled in a quiet and comfortable Repoſe; this I doubt not is real Divine Conſolation.

3. The differences of true and falſe Comforts, which are derived from the *Subject*, or Perſons feeling their reviving Influence, or rather indeed the adjuncts of thoſe Perſons conſidered in their abſolute or relative State, are as palpable as any. The ſoundeſt Joys, being only the Poſſeſſion of a truly Regenerate Godly Soul. The unſound lodging in the wicked Hypocritical, for the moſt part as their proper Habitation: So that if it can be known to a Mans ſelf, whether he be really good or bad, it may ordinarily be known whether his Peace be right or wrong. But for this, I refer to the *Characters* of the Pſalmiſt in the beginning of this Diſcourſe.

I only add, That where there's no Life, there can be no true Comfort. 'Tis *My God*, verſ. 22. *Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living*, Matth. 22. 32. 'Tis no leſs true in a Spiritual ſenſe, than a Natural. If *My God* in natural Relation, argue the Life of Nature: My God in federal Relation does as ſtrongly infer the Life of Grace. For 'tis not any where affirmed of *Cain*, *Eſau*, *Judas*, &c. after their Death, that God was then their God, as of *Abraham*, &c. although they be no leſs alive in Soul; the Immortality whereof is a common Privilege, and admits of no degrees in one more than other. *My God* then to *Abraham*, &c. is another thing, and to

be taken in another ſenſe, than that wherein it may be applicable to *Cain*, &c. ſince 'tis uſed of the godly after Death, in an appropriate incommunicable ſenſe. It may truly be apply'd to the very Devils and damned in any ſenſe, not importing the Moral, Spiritual Life of *Purity and Peace*; but in this 'tis the ſole Prerogative of the godly, that are *born again, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God*, Joh. 1. 13. When therefore our *Pſalmiſt* owns the *Divine Majeſty*, under the Relation of *My God*, the meaning is, *Mine* to whom I am confederated, united as a principle of new Divine Spiritual Life, as the Soul of my Soul, in whoſe *all* I have a true *federal Right*, in his Being, his Perfections, his *Knowledge, Goodneſs, Love, Life, Peace*, &c. whoſe Comforts therefore benignly eye me, and invite my acceptance, becauſe I, and all mine are his, *He himſelf, and all his* through (not Creation merely, but) the *Covenant of Grace*, are mine; I therefore poſſeſs living Comforts, becauſe I enjoy a living God as mine own, by *Vital Union*.

Indeed, Spiritual Joys only affect Spiritual living Souls. Cordials are never adminiſtred to diſanimated Carkaſes, nor Divine Comforts to the Dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes. Firſt Reſurrection, then Aſcenſion into a Heaven of Reſt. Natural, Animal Life inherits no Spiritual Peace, any more than a natural Body, Celeſtial Pleaſures. *All muſt be changed* ere they can be tranſlated into this Paradiſe. As the corruptible part of us is aboliſhed at the Reſurrection of the Body, elſe we cannot *enter into Life*: So the corrupting part muſt be Crucified at the Reſurrection of our Souls, or we *cannot enter into Peace*. Iſa. 57. 2.

1 *Cor.* 15. 44, 50, 51.

He

*He shall enter into Peace, they shall rest upon their Beds, walking in uprightness.* A Scripture something cloudy, which the former clause being singular, this plural in the *Hebrew*, and both Figurative renders yet more perplex'd: But by a Transposition not unusual, and taking the last word of the foregoing Verse as a Supplement to this (being 'tis the Substantive to the Participle הֹלֵךְ) it may be read thus, שָׁלוֹם הַצַּדִּיק הֹלֵךְ נְכֹחוֹ יָבִיא *The Righteous walking in his uprightness shall* [come goe] *into Peace; they* [*i. e.* אֲנָשִׁי חֶסֶר *sickly Men of Mercy or Holiness*] *shall quietly rest upon their Beds.* An exceeding proper allusion to the Signification of [אֱנוֹשׁ] *Enosh*, A Bed for the sick. The Bed is either, 1. The Grave for the Body, a common Metaphor, 2 *Chron.* 16. 14, *&c.* (as 'tis to stile Death a sleep) yet this would but be a jejune Interpretation, improper to the place, for even to the wicked 'tis so. 2. Therefore the Bed imports the state of everlasting repose and rest for the Soul in Heaven. Though righteous and merciful Men, of infirm Bodies and Souls, be taken *away from approaching Evils, yet living and dying in uprightness, they enter into never ending Rest and Peace.* That is their Portion after Death, and the first Fruits thereof their present Possession.

*To compleat the Sentence and sense, understand and insert here* ἀπὸ κοινοῦ [walking in uprightness] *for although the number disagree, yet the matter requires it.*

That of *Solomon*, Eccles. 2. 2. is every way verified of the wicked. *I said, of laughter it is mad, and of mirth, what doth it?* For what greater frenzy, than to laugh in the face of incensed condemning Justice. And, *Oh mirth, what dost thou?* In the midst of the *devouring Fire and everlasting Burn-*

*ings*; which are already kindled in a cauterized *Conſcience*, though for a little while rak'd up and ſmothered. But whether ſo or no, I am ſure there's juſt reaſon, that even in *laughter their hearts ſhould be marvellous ſorrowful, becauſe the end of that mirth will be doleful heavineſs*, Prov. 14. 13. *For the wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up mire and dirt. There is no peace ſaith my God to the wicked*, Iſa. 57. 20, 21. But when the *Lord Heals and Leads, he will reſtore comforts to Mourners*, Verſ. 18.

Art thou then Spiritually alive, O my Soul, or dead? Dead thou art if deſtitute of Soul. *Thy Soul is God: Chriſt is thy Life*, Col. 3. 4. *The Life thou liveſt in the Fleſh ought to be by the Faith of the Son of God*, Gal. 2. 20. And *he alſo is thy Peace*, Mic. 5. 5. Eph. 2. 14. If thou liveſt in God, *and God in thee by Faith and Love*, thy Peace is ſolid and genuine; but in Diſunion, and Separation from God and Chriſt, there's neither true Life nor Peace. Enjoyeſt thou a *Chriſt within thee?* He is then *thy hope of Glory*; therefore thy Haven of Reſt, Joy, and Conſolation. Do'ſt thou experience any *Communion of Life* betwixt thy ſelf and Holy Jeſus? Do'ſt thou feel any thing of his powerful, gracious Influence? *Holy Souls* are Spiritually moved by the *Holy Ghoſt*, which is the bond of Union betwixt them and God. By him *Chriſt dwells in us*, 1 Joh. 3. 24. Rom. 8. 9, 10, 11, 15. Hath this quickening Spirit enliven'd thee? Thou may'ſt know that the Spirit of Grace hath quickened thee, by his Fruits, *Gal.* 5. 22, 23. *For if thou liveſt in the Spirit, thou wilt walk alſo in the Spirit*, Verſ. 25. *And the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus, will free thee from the Law of Sin and Death*, Rom. 8. 2. (which naturally thou walkeſt by)

by) *that thou wilt* [*affectionately ſavour* (ſo is φρονεῖν tranſlated *Matth.* 16. 23. *Col.* 3. 2.)] *mind, reliſh the things of the Spirit, not of the Fleſh,* Verſ. 5. *If thou* art (or haſt a *Spiritual* Being) *according to the Spirit,* Verſ. 5. or *in the Spirit,* Verſ. 9. *he houſes* [οἰκεῖ] *in thee, and makes thee Spiritually minded, which is Life and Peace,* Verſ. 6. and by degrees deſtroys out of thee the *minding* or ſavour *of the Fleſh, which is Death or Enmity againſt God,* Verſ. 7. Haſt thou ſtudied theſe things to know them, and thy ſelf, whether thou doſt really feel them, throughly conſidering, and ſearching all within, to ſee what one thing thou canſt pitch upon, that will be a ſure Evidence, that thou liveſt in the Spirit, and he in thee; without which, thou canſt never groundedly ſay [*My God*] as the *Pſalmiſt*; for *thou art none of his,* Rom. 8. 9. therefore he none of thine, that is, by *federal Union.* What then are thy φρονήματα? Theſe are the ſureſt Teſtimonies of a Life in God by his Spirit. 'Tis a very comprehenſive Word, full of ſenſe, no one in our language can expreſs it. For it includes the nobleſt Actings of the whole Soul, in *knowing, conſidering, minding, regarding, thinking wiſely, diſcreetly, prudently, powerfully, effectually*; with *affection, ſavour, and a ſpiritual taſte and ſenſe of ſweetneſs and delectable goodneſs, with the reſult hereof, thoſe ſtated Principles,* which theſe actings eſtabliſh as a Law to our Conſciences, Affections and Practices; not only the πρᾶξις or agency of *the mind,* but the ἀποτέλεσμα, or fruit of its *Operation,* the thinking of the mind, and the thought formed by the mind. Upon what Objects doſt thou fix thy Mindings and Willings of this Nature? And what kind of things, of what Vertue and Efficacy are the ſavoury Cogitations that iſſue from theſe

mind-

mindings? When thou ſettleſt theſe Workings of Soul upon the Fleſh and the World, thou makeſt them thy gods, as the carnal heart does. Truly nothing deſerves, or can be worthy of this contention of Mind, but what is Spiritual and Celeſtial. Wherever this is engaged, from thence is thy Life, and thy Peace is Congenerous to thy Life. If the beſt things habitually and ſtatedly enjoy theſe endeavours and motions of thy ſuperiour Powers, and maintain an inviolable Authority over them; thy Life is the beſt, and no other thy Conſolations.

*Laſtly*, real and deceiving Comforts may be differenced by their tendency and effects. They both end as they begin. The cheating Peace of the *Prophane and Hypocritical*, will never produce any conſcionable perſevering cares, and endeavours, to pleaſe God and profit Men. But, *the joy of the Lord, is the Souls ſtrength* in his ſervice, and evermore leads to him in Holineſs of Heart and Life; and to more lively actings of *Faith*, *Love*, and *Gratitude*, to growth in *Grace* and *Godlineſs*; as is not obſcurely intimated in the example of the *Pſalmiſt*. We will ſuppoſe the actings of his Grace to proceed in the ſame tenor, with the Expreſſions thereof in the *Pſalm*. For we have no other Evidence thereof, and may Rationally judge this to be a Report of his inward *Senſations*, in their Nature, Order, Progreſs, and Perfection, as we find in other *Pſalms*. Well, his Faith, which at the beginning appears ſomething pendulous, weak, and wavering as to that particular thing, about which it was firſt engaged, *viz.* the Interpoſal of Divine Juſtice, to ſecure the Church from the rage of its Enemies, and could only look for this in a Petitionary way, and view it in its cauſes,

ſes, Verſ. 1, 2, 3, *&c.* does after this favourable Aſpect of Divine Comforts in this Verſe, grow up to a prophetical confidence, in the certain futurity of the event, Verſ. 23. And as it had eyed the cauſe, Divine Vengeance, in a Duplication of the Addreſs to it, in the firſt weak act of affiance, Verſ. 1. So alſo, Verſ. laſt, preſents a double Teſtimony of the more eſtabliſhed and ſtrong act of confident aſſurance, that the effect which he expected, ſhould undoubtedly be produced. What he only ſaw the poſſibility of, in the firſt workings of his Faith, he foreſees the Exiſtence of in the laſt; what he only beg'd that it might be, in the infancy of his Faith; he peremptorily concludes, and promiſes himſelf, that it would be in this its Maturity. Then his Faith only wiſhes, here it determines; there was his Suppoſition, here is definitive Sentence and Deciſion; that his Prayer, this his Anſwer, The Victory of his Faith over all preceding fears and dubitations. Hope triumphing over his Deſpondency.

And that Comfort has a ſpecial Influence, thus to heighten Faith, and perfect its actings is apparent from the nature of the thing. For ſince it is the quiet, and reſt of the Mind, upon good Evidence of the Love of God, to a Man in particular through Chriſt, it can do no other than embolden his Addreſſes, and encourage his confidence. Even as when a tender Father receives into, and cheriſhes in his boſom, a reconciled Child, and ſpeaks to *his Heart:* This removes fully all thoſe Jealouſies and Doubts, which the remembrance of former unkindneſſes and diſtances might create, and invites the Child to a more inheſitant and free recumbence upon, and committing himſelf to this ſo amply atteſted love and tenderneſs, of his now

no

no more angry Father: So by the like reaſon it introduces an additional fervour and flame to the Child's love, and engages him to a more full and ingenuous Expreſſion of his dutifulneſs and filial obſervance. And no leſs may be gathered from the *Pſalmiſts* proceſs here: For before the Text, though he have frequent occaſion to make mention of God, almoſt in every one of the foregoing Verſes, *viz.* ten or eleven times; yet 'tis with that ſeeming diſtance and ſtrangeneſs, that we meet not with a word of appropriation to himſelf in ſpecial: But upon the benigne Aſpect of the Conſolations of God, his Love will no longer ſtand off, but makes its neareſt approaches, and runs into his embraces, in a double affectionate claim of Propriety, in the compaſs of four Verſes following; as oft as he mentions the Lord, he follows it with a *Relative*, not permitting it to paſs by, as before, like an Alien. Verſ. 22. *The Lord is my defence, My God is the Rock of my Refuge.* I have now abundant reaſon to follow him with relation Love, as mine own, ſince he *loves my Soul into Reſt and Peace*, becoming my Comforter. Oh ſweet reviving token of the ſingular Love of my God! How dearly *do I love him for it?* Yet this is not all. Is this *Honey-comb* for my ſelf alone? Do I arrogate ſole Propriety in theſe Riches? No, my Charity obliges me to Judge, that my Brethren in Affliction are not deſtitute of the ſame Conſolation through intereſt in God. I ſo love my Neighbour as to make account he is as good as my ſelf, and has an equal ſhare with me in this infinite Treaſure; therefore for *my Brethren and Companions ſake*, I ſay [OUR GOD] without reſtriction to my ſelf. Verſ. 23. *Yea, our God ſhall cut them off.* He is a common good; yours as

as well as mine, and brings a common benefit to us all, in ſaving us from our Adverſaries. And herein he ſhews, not only his love to Man, and thereby conſequentially that it did reſpect a higher object, 1 *Joh.* 4. 20, 21. but directly and immediately demonſtrates, that he grew in love to God himſelf, in that, he glorifies the Communicativeneſs of Divine Goodneſs, by an acknowledgment of its extenſiveneſs, in a peculiar manner to Multitudes beſides himſelf; even all included in the relative [O U R] as if it had been ſaid, *I love him, becauſe he loves me*, ſo as to *be mine: I love him yet more, becauſe he together with me loves mine*; condeſcending to be *theirs* alſo. I love that goodneſs that flows to me; I further love that goodneſs that overflows to all with me; my Friends, my People. For my own ſake, for their ſake, for its own ſake: I love it above all.

Thus as the *Work of Righteouſneſs is Peace, and the effect of Righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever*, Iſa. 32. 17. So on the other hand, the Work of Peace is Righteouſneſs. Pſal. 85. 8. *I will hear what* [יְהוָה] *the ſtrong God Jehovah will ſpeak, becauſe he will ſpeak peace to his people, and to* [חֲסִידָיו] *his merciful ones* [וְאַל יָשׁוּבוּ Indicatively, not Imperatively] *and they ſhall not return to folly.* This Peace will be a preſervative againſt Sin; whence 'tis ſaid to Engarriſon our Minds and Hearts, in that ſo often mentioned, *Phil.* 4. 7. ſo promotes it, that Holineſs, which ſome call Negative; but it is no leſs productive of Poſitive Holineſs, *Iſa.* 61. 2, 3. Chriſt is anointed and endowed with the *Holy Spirit, to Preach good tidings*, &c. *To comfort all that mourn: To appoint unto them that mourn in* Sion, *to give unto them beauty for Aſhes, the Oyl of joy for mourning, the Garment of Praiſe, for the Spirit of*

*of heavineſs.* But wherefore all this? It follows, *That they might be called* (*i. e.* might be as before, *Iſa.* 4. 3. and 35. 8. and 56. 7. compared with *Luk.* 19. 46. *Matth.* 5. 9, 19.) *Trees of Righteouſneſs the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified.* To this purpoſe alſo is that Prayer of the Apoſtle, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 16, 17. *God who loves and gives everlaſting Conſolation through Grace, comfort your Hearts and ſtabliſh you in every good Word and Work. Grace begets Conſolation, and this begets good Converſation. He that through Grace comforts,* does alſo through *Comfort eſtabliſh in every good Word and Work.*

Shew then, Oh my Soul, the ſoundneſs of thy Comforts by their Fruits. That Peace which is impregnant is impoſtorous. In what further degree do thy inward Joys impower thee to *Love the Lord,* the giver, or thy Neighbour, thy Partaker. Canſt thou pretend Peace in thy *Conſcience,* and live in contention or uncharitableneſs with thy Brother? Does not thy inward Comfort calm thy paſſions, meeken thy converſes, render thee profitable, uſeful to Men, in the beſt endeavours to induce them to love God and Vertue, and abhor Immorality, Viciouſneſs and Hypocriſie, that by thy means they may be alſo led in this method, into the way of Peace, and through it again into the way of Purity. If thy Comforts be ſolid and ſincere, thou wilt by them be enabled to uſe the utmoſt diligence in propagating them; ſince that is one of Gods great Deſigns in communicating them. 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4. *Bleſſed be God, even the Father of Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our Tribulation;* (for what end?) *That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God.* And

if

if God make thee able, thou ought'ſt to be willing. They are only fallacious Joys that are envious. A corrupt Heart, ſo that it ſelf do but enjoy reſt, matters not though all the World be in trouble; nay, grudges others the quiet it enjoys, and triumphs, or ſecretly rejoyces at, or at leaſt is not *afflicted in their Afflictions*. *Haman* will drink and be jolly, when the whole City is in perplexity. A wicked Soul is not concern'd for the content of any beſide it ſelf, will rather *add Affliction to the afflicted*, than indeavour or rejoyce in their Conſolation. Thy Comfort is not good, if not conformable to the Fountain of *Goodneſs* in Communicativeneſs: As far as confin'd 'tis corrupt. In the Harveſt of true Joys, thy *Jordan* will overflow the Banks. Uncharitable, illiberal, unbountiful Conſolations are *Illuſions*. If thy light and gladneſs diffuſe not its beneficial rayes abroad, to revive and refreſh the Diſconſolate Heart, 'tis but a glimmering *Meteor*, not a *Beam* from the Sun of Righteouſneſs; and thus does it not extend it ſelf, if a *Vital Heat and Influence* do not accompany it; as 'tis but a flaſhy, wild, deceitful Spark, *Iſa.* 50. 11. which will vaniſh into Smoak and darkneſs, if it be not kindled by a flame of true Love to God and Univerſal Righteouſneſs. Wherefore thou canſt never bleſs thy ſelf in reflection upon thine own Peace, if it engage thee not in ſerious cares, to propagate *Holineſs* firſt, and thereby *Peace*. For an unholy Soul is abſolutely inconſolable for want of *Right*, therefore ſhould be ſo for want of *Will*; ſince a Will to apply Comforts, without *Right*, will certainly reduce to that woful plight, which the Apoſtle, with ſo much concern, reports, 1 Theſ. 5. 3. *When they ſhall ſay peace and ſafety; then ſuddain Deſtruction cometh upon them, as*

*Travail*

*Travail upon a Woman With-child, and they ſhall not eſcape.* Be ready to ſpeak a word in due ſeaſon to the weary, but be cautious in ſolacing ſuch as the Apoſtle deſcribes and reproves. Rom. 3. 17, 18. *Who have not known the way of Peace*; Why? *There is no fear of God before their eyes*; leaſt the terror of that threatning arreſt thee, *Ezek.* 33. For by publiſhing Peace to thoſe againſt whom thou ſhouldſt proclaim War from Heaven, thou wilt delude them into everlaſting Death in their Sins, under the mask of Life and Comfort; *but their Blood ſhall be required at thy hands.* God's Tenders of Peace, are only conditional, and ſo muſt thine.

Look to it then, O my Soul, as the one thing needful, in the firſt place, that the *Grace of God bringing Salvation*, and therefore *everlaſting Conſolation to thee*, do efficaciouſly *teach thee* this *Righteouſneſs*, to be very induſtrious to lead others, (whoſe Concern God ſometimes ſeems to prefer before his own, *Matth.* 5. 23, 24. and *Chap.* 12. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.) eſpecially thy Relations, in the right way to Peace, informing their Judgments, rouſing their Conſciences, reproving their Sins, directing their Practice, counſelling, commanding, reſtraining, and conſtraining them, as far as poſſible, to be good, and do good freely, with an ingenuous ſpontaneity and readineſs of mind. But as thou muſt learn others, ſo under the influence of that beneficial Grace, thou thy ſelf muſt be learnt to *deny*, ſo as to crucifie, *all Ungodlineſs*, ſpiritual Evil, *and worldly Luſts*, carnal Wickedneſs, *and live ſoberly*, in a juſt temper and moderation of thine own Spirit, Affections, Paſſions, Appetite; *and godlily*, in a religious aſſiduity of Endeavour to pleaſe the Lord, and approve thy ſelf to him through

through Christ, in all things. This is both the true undeceiving Mean to attain Comfort, and also the certain and inseparable Fruit of it: The more thou growest herein, the more redundant will be thy satisfaction; and if, on the other hand, *thy Peace be as a River, thy Righteousness will be as the waves of the Sea, Isai.* 48. 18.

Try then thy Comfort by its Productions: If it will permit thee to dishonour God and defile thy Conscience, to be vain in thy Spirit, and vile in thy Communication and Conversation, to debauch others, and damn thy self, neither fearing God, nor regarding Man, nor valuing and taking care for thine own self, 'tis no better than its Progeny, and will but only lead thee hood-wink'd, in a pleasing dream of Paradise, into the depth of Hell: But contrarily, if thy Peace be procreative, and bring forth Twins, a heavenly Spirit, and a holy Life: If it be as the Dew to thy Graces, and cause them to flourish, and yield their Fruit in due season: If it enlarge thy heart God-ward, and carry thee as upon Eagles Wings to thy Redeemer, in a more intire, affectionate, cordial subjection to his Authority and Government, its Origin is Heaven, and in those everlasting Pleasures and Joys will it finally terminate. Leading thee to sound and real Goodness, it will undoubtedly issue in that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*

The *Reprehensive* part of this kind of Inferences, cannot be omitted; happy we if there were no reason for it. I only will prosecute it in one Instance.

Therefore just Matter of Challenge and Rebuke will arise upon this Doctrine, for sitting down under the Perplexities of our own mad Thoughts,

without a due care to prepare for, and poſſeſs our ſelves of the Comforts of God. I confeſs the generality of Men are preſumptuouſly bold in dividing theſe, and with a daring Impudence will raſhly arreſt the Promiſes, with a heady Violence rack and torture them, or cut and mangle them, (as *Sciron* and *Procruſtes* did all Paſſengers) till they ſeem to be made fit for their own Beds, and become unwillingly willing to lie down with them. Comfort muſt conform to them, they will not to it. But theſe will certainly inherit Confuſion, when thoſe raviſh'd Comforts relinquiſh their too late awakened Souls at Death; or lie down in the moſt grievous Horrors, if before that diſmal hour they be ever rouſed into Repentance. And oft it falls out that thoſe who moſt audaciouſly uſurp'd Divine Conſolations in their impenitent Eſtate, become moſt ſhy of them after their real awakenings; they dare not be deluded again, by an over-forwardneſs; their aſſuming to themſelves Peace without Right before, coſt them ſo dear, that it makes them more jealous, ſuſpicious, and cautious in bottoming it, ere they can adventure again to apply the Promiſes. But as Preſumption leads ſome blindfold into a falſe Peace, ſo Deſpair cauſes many to reject a true. Some receive this at the hands of Juſtice, as a merited Puniſhment for aggravated Sins, and procraſtination of Repentance, to be judicially given up by the Lord to Horrors of Conſcience, ſo deep, ſo durable, as not to be able to ſee any thing but Terror in the whole Book of God, till he remit this Puniſhment, and lighten his hand. Others are knock'd off from the Promiſes by the Spirit of Bondage, in a ſmart and home-conviction of Sin and divine Indignation becauſe of it, God hereby

hereby designing to make them more meet for it. And indeed none are more afraid of receiving Comfort than those, that being throughly startled with the discoveries of their Corruptions and God's just Anger, do really stand in most need of it, and are under the divine Methods of Preparation for it. Such stand off, and dispute their own Title, either, 1. through Ignorance or Inadvertency, not understanding or considering themselves, and the Work of God within them: Or, 2. through Humility and Tenderness, as afraid of presuming: Or, 3. through a Spice of Pride and Haughtiness, as resolv'd to bring their Peny to the Promise, ('tis Mr. *Hooker*'s Phrase); not content with such Qualifications as God limits in the Word, in order to Peace, they must super-errogate in their Preparations, and be better than they can be, still complaining of Unworthiness, Unworthiness, (which in one sence is true) as if they would not receive Comfort, *gratis*, nor accept of the Gift upon God's Terms, making them need it, and meet for it; except they be, (which none possibly can be) worthy of it, merit and deserve it. Or, lastly, through a kind of obstinacy and stubbornness of Spirit, and the predominancy of Melancholy, (to which every thing that is saddening and dejecting, hath too much of agreeableness and sweetness,) as if they were in love with their Griefs and Woes; will not attend to any rational or religious Arguments, that might relieve them, *Rachel*-like refusing to be *comforted*, although they can give no just and satisfying reason, for that *Recusancy*. It may be they are pleased with the Sensuality of Sorrow, because it hits their Humour, harmonizes with their Dumpishness, and gives them a little ease,

by cherishing their Disease as Water in a Dropsie. Neither can I render any other reason, why others who pretend higher, should imagine they can never be excessive enough in their grief for Sin, but are still ambitious to find their *Head become Waters, and theirs Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that they may weep day and night*; which if they experience in any desired measure, then are they well satisfied, and at ease, making this an Ingredient of their Comfort, stiling it melting and being affected; which when they feel not, they are all upon the whine, and cannot be reconciled to their more deep, solid, and less superficial Repentings and Dolors. But this womanish part of Repentance in God's *Whinls* (as one used to call them), though in its due degree and place desirable and commendable, yet is the least considerable and lowest thing in it; as every judicious Divine and Christian very well knows, being only sensitive, not deliberative or spiritual in its rise and acting, and real nature; and the former, *viz.* melancholick Pensiveness, and delight therein, is no part of Repentance at all, but only an effort of natural Constitution, or a gratification thereof, including nothing reasonable and humane, nor divine and spiritual. No more is any thing in that Person, who cannot satisfactorily resolve that *Quære* of the Psalmist, *Why art thou cast down, oh my Soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Psal.* 42. *ult.* For this is distinctive of sound trouble and unsound; the former has some special and particular Matter, as a reason and ground to alledge for it self; the latter either can give no reason at all, or hovers in the wild confusion of generals; whence it springs, and how it rises, and for what it is, lies in the dark. Let not that pass

then

then for right trouble, which cannot give a juſt account of it ſelf at the bar of Reaſon, guided by the Word of God: and if it cannot ſtand there, how will it plead before the Tribunal of Chriſt? Where we muſt render a reaſon *of all things done in the Fleſh, whether good or evil*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. the very Thoughts of the heart being there to be judged, *Rom.* 2. 15, 16. troubled and troubling thoughts as well as others. As then thoſe are infinitely blame-worthy, who maintain an ungrounded Peace in their minds, although their hearts have never been ſenſible, and ſick of their native habitual enmity againſt God and Holineſs, and will not be beaten out of their preſumptuous confidence in the Goodneſs and Covenant of God, although altogether unqualified; and thoſe alſo who being a little chaſtized with the Whips and Scorpions of the Law, in a tart Conviction, and Terror of Conſcience, ſoon grow weary of the burthen and pain; and being more ſick of their Corroſives, than their Corruptions, begin Dog-like to lick whole their Sores, and will have the Promiſes right or wrong, as a lenitive or ſtupefactive rather, to eaſe their pains, or deſtroy their ſence; (though the Core abide within) and being well-pleas'd, and ſatisfy'd with the palliate Cure, trail on a little while 'till the more deep lancings of a thorough Conviction diſcover the deceit; or the incurable gangrene break out at Death and Judgment, to their ineffable Horror: So likewiſe are they worthy to be greatly blamed, on the other hand, who are really ſick, but afraid of Balm, and the Phyſician; and though every Sin be made grievous, and pain them at the very heart, and nothing in the World would be more acceptable than a Saviour, whom to ſubject themſelves to

they appear heartily resolved, and willing to embrace every one of his Laws; yet make danger of applying to themselves, and taking encouragement from his Promises of Mercy (that *in Him are Yea, and in Him, Amen*) because, forsooth, they are not so and so humbled, holy, affectionate, *&c.* As if 'twas not Evangelical New Covenant-Perfection, *i. e. Uprightness*, but *Legal*, *Personal*, *Universal*, and *Perpetual Obedience*, which God required as the Condition of the Covenant of Grace, and they must not dare to accept of Christ and his Benefits, except they were so good before-hand as to stand in no need of them. But why I beseech you thus in love with your own Torture, and desirous still to abide upon the Rack of Anxiety and Dolour? Trouble is not its own end. God does not wound our Consciences, or crucifie our Comfort in carnal Things, merely because he loves to torment us, or that we may be Devils to ourselves, by protracting our own Woes beyond the bounds of *Decorum* and Necessity. He only designs by the *Antiperistasis* of our Sorrows, more to sweeten the Joys of his Salvation, which he hath prepared for us; and by mingling Gall and Wormwood with our delicious Sins, to embitter that, which only prepares us for, and assigns us over unto the direful Miseries of everlasting Damnation.

In brief, one would not think that the reason of any could be reconcil'd to their own Woes, much less their Sense: Yet common Experience tells us, that some will every moment be conjuring up new Fiends to torture themselves; and seem to study nothing else, but by fetching in all the Fuel they can possibly reach, and all the Fire that divine Vengeance breaths out in the Scriptures, to kindle a Hell in their own Consciences; as though

though Misery were their proper Element, and infinitely more desirable than divine Mercy, which they solicitously fly from, and with all imaginable Artifice and Industry fence against, as if in a pernicious Malice against themselves, they were sure 'twould be their utter undoing to be happy. Corruption, Temptation, and a dark cloudy Complexion, with confederate strength and stratagems, besiege and storm their Imaginations; which having invested, from thence, as a strong Citadel, they batter down their Reason, so that nothing can be heard or regarded, but what will take the stronger side, to war against Comfort and God. Display before them all the amiable Beauties of Infinite Goodness and Love, in its wonderful descents to the Chief of Sinners, with whose Transgressions their sober Considerations cannot dare to equal their own: Represent to their view in a clear Heaven of Light, the incomprehensible Glories and Condescensions of the ever to be admired and adored *Son of Righteousness*; whose astonishing Free Grace induced him to be willing for the sake of lost Mankind, to suffer an Eclipse under that thick Cloud of divine Vengeance, which was due for the Sins, not of one particular Sinner only, but of the whole World; and the Merit of whose Passion was sufficient to expiate the Sins of infinite Worlds; yet will they scarce allow this to be a balance for their own. Lay open before their Eyes the rich and glorious Treasury of the divine Promises, and gracious Invitations to such as are under like Circumstances with theirs; and therefore to them as fully and clearly, as if their Names were engraven in the Front of every one of those Bonds upon God's Fidelity, or these written upon their own Foreheads, or proclaimed to

them by name from Heaven. Discover to them with the brightest Evidence, that their Spirit, Condition, Frame, and Preparations, are really such as God hath described and required, as the sole Conditions of his Grace and Mercy; and that there is as perfect an Agreement betwixt their inward Sensations and State, and those God will certainly own and embrace with his Love, as can reasonably be expected and desired: Yet will they find some subtle, cunning, studied evasions and shifts to perswade themselves and others, that they have some reason to be mad, in rejecting all; and will stifly argue against their own inward sense and feeling, and lye against their own Experience, rather than by receiving these Comforts, comply with the Bounty and Kindness of Heaven, that so freely and graciously tenders them.

Why then dost thou contend against thy self, oh my Soul! and quarrel with the admirable Condescensions, the most bountiful Tenders, Largess, and Munificence of Heaven? Art thou weary of thy Sins, and under a practical Conviction of their abominable offensiveness to God, heartily willing to relinquish all; following thy desires and resolutions hereof with serious Cares and Endeavours, not abiding the very thoughts or hankerings of thy heart that lean towards them, carefully avoiding all Occasions, Temptations, Motions, which might irritate thee to commit them, in indignation and revenge against thy self for indulging thy self in them; now resolutely bent with the Aid of God to mortifie them, and not to spare hands, feet, or eyes, the most sweet and endearing *Dalilahs*, thy Master-reigning Sins, constitutional, customary, pleasing, profitable Corruptions, recommended by Age, Calling, publick Allowance,

Allowance, Practice, which to forbear may expose to Scoffs, Scorns, Sufferings, Death it self, as in Times of Persecution. Art thou daily in bitterness of Soul for them? Are they evermore in their odious Nature and Aggravations before thee? Art thou watchful against them, and unto the contrary Duties, Graces, and holy Exercises, that there is not one Law of God, which 'tis not thy earnest desire and labour to observe, heartily imploring the strength of Heaven to engage in all for thee, and manifest its Might in thy Weakness? And when thou hast done thy best, hast thou learnt to deny thy self *as an unprofitable Servant, having only done what* (nay far less than) *thou ought'st*? Not daring to omit any part of thy Work, nor when done most exactly, to make a Christ of it: but committing thy Person and Performances, by Faith into his gracious hands, to be presented to his Father, sprinkled with his Blood of Satisfaction, perfumed with his Incense of Intercession; nothing but divine Free Grace, through Christ's Mediation, becomes the sole Support and Stay of thy Hopes, as well as the Foundation of thy Faith; maintaining in all a never-ceasing Jealousie over thy slippery, treacherous heart, lest it stain all thy Actions with Impurity, or corrupt all thy Intentions by Hypocrisie; a Sin to be fear'd and wrestled against, above all other, thy perpetual dread and hate? Is this thy state, frame, and deportment? And yet dost thou boggle at the Promises, and start aside, in aversation from, or a rejection of their refreshing Consolations, upon I know not what frivolous Pretences? Oh thy Folly! Oh thy Fury! For beside the infinite wrong to thy self, both as a knocking of the Wheels, that thou dost but drive

heavily

heavily in God's Service, and a living in the confines or a corner of Hell, when *Heaven is opening to thee its everlasting Gates*; thou also blaspheme'st the unconfinable Goodness and Love of thy heavenly Father, the affectionate Bowels and Grace of thy compassionate Redeemer; thou griev'st the Holy sealing Spirit of Grace and Peace, and give'st the lye to the Promises; Sins as Hellish, as any thou hast already renounc'd and forsaken. Has Almighty Love and Grace check'd the exorbitancies of thy dissolute licentious Will and Affections, bounded the raging Sea of thy Lusts, insomuch that thou dare'st not, wilt'st not pass the limits he hath confin'd thee to by his Laws? Hath God enabled thee with a free undissembled Consent to embrace the Conditions of the Covenant, in repenting, and chearfully giving up thy self to be governed in all things by the ever-blessed *Son of God*, which is a performance of thy part of the Covenant? And can'st thou conceit that infinite Fidelity, which gives thee the power to do all this, and works in thee to observe thy part, will not be real and faithful, in perfecting what concerns himself on his part, but that his Covenant is mere Collusion; that he hath only brought thee into a Fool's Paradise, and all his great and precious Promises, are only great and pompous Nothings, not worthy to be rely'd on? That he hath done all this for thee, carry'd thee thorough the burthen and heat of the day, and tenders thee thine Hire, yet will be angry if thou accept it. For why dost thou not receive and enjoy the Comforts of the Promises and Perfections of God, so liberally presented to thy embracement, so sweetly by their amiable Aspect inviting thee? Is it because they do not suit thee, are not proper and sufficient

ſufficient to revive thee? Is it becauſe thou needeſt them not, deſireſt them not? No, nothing of this Nature. What then is the matter, oh my Soul? They are fit for thee, but thou art not fit for them, not duly prepar'd. That's ſomething, if true. But who told thee ſo, God or the Devil? If God, ſhew the Scripture. *Out of the Law and Teſtimony* muſt thou produce *ſomething* more than I have deſcribed, that God requires to qualifie thee for his Mercy. Something more than an unfeigned owning his Covenant, in ſerious reſolution, care, endeavour, and induſtrious, laborious diligence to go through with thy part of it, under the influence of his Power and Grace, and Holy Spirit. Doth Satan tell thee that this is not due Preparation? And doſt thou, dar'ſt thou believe him rather than God? God forbid.

Where then doſt thou ſtick? What art thou afraid of? Is there any thing to be feared but Sin? There 'tis: Thou art afraid of ſinning by too haſty applying the Promiſes for thy revival. A very laudable Fear. 'Tis well that Sin is dreadful. Stand to that. Be then alſo afraid to ſin, by refuſing to apply them, thereby continuing thy perplexities. For 'tis very certain,

1. That 'tis a Sin not to ſerve God chearfully, with Love; eſpecially when he hath done for us whatever is neceſſary to engage us thereto. If he have in reality prepar'd thee for thoſe Comforts, which he hath prepar'd for thee, he hath done that, upon account whereof he will expect thy ready, ingenuous, affectionate Obedience, whether thou be ſatisfy'd as to thy Preparations or no. But if thou ſtill refuſeſt his Comforts, and protracteſt thy Troubles, thou eludeſt the higheſt Engagement to love him, and in deſpite of his Goodneſs

Goodneſs perſevereſt to do his work as a Slave only, wilt not as a Child, which is a high Affront to thy Father.

2. 'Tis a Sin to reject God's Offers, a Scorn put upon his Goodneſs to refuſe his Free Gifts. When he creates a Storm in our Thoughts, and drives us before the blaſt of his Indignation, into the Port of real Holineſs, then does he generouſly tender us thoſe needful refreſhments, which will revive our weather-beaten Souls; can we now ſpurn them away from us, and be innocent? Here therefore is Sin on both hands. How ſhall we caſt the balance? We muſt not ſin our ſelves into Comfort, neither muſt we ſin it away. Cut the hair. Well then, all depends upon this, the determination, what is too haſty, what too ſlow application of Promiſes? And this upon the preceding *Quære*, what is due Preparation? For to apply Promiſes, when rightly qualified, is no Sin, but Duty; therefore to neglect it is Sin. Then are we too haſty, when we run before we are bidden, not otherwiſe. God by creating in us the pre-required Promiſe-diſpoſitions, bids us take all the Bleſſings in the Promiſe which they diſpoſe for. *When the Condition is perform'd, the Covenant is a Command to accept its Mercy*, which cannot be refuſed without diſobedience to God. 'Twould be ſtrange petulancy, when Chriſt ſays, *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom*, &c. to reply, no, I dare not, I am not qualify'd. Such is the refuſal to inherit his Comforts, when he hath wrought in us their Conditions. And if the foremention'd be not, where are they? Remember, Oh my Soul, thou liveſt not under the Covenant of Works, but of Grace: And if thou doubteſt of thy Preparations, reſume thy Work, try them better,

better, make them ſounder, that thy ſecond and renew'd Eſſays may be unqueſtionable. Yet remember alſo, that 'tis a grievous Sin to belye thy ſelf, and deny God's Work; he expects thou ſhould'ſt conſider, and *own the Operation of his Hands*, and give him the Glory of the Fruits of his Love in thy Regeneration. Take heed of detaining the *Truth* in the *Priſon of Unrighteouſneſs*: Be juſt to God and thy ſelf. Do not dare to blaſpheme his Grace, by attributing it to other Cauſes. As thou muſt not flatter thy ſelf, ſo neither forſwear the Grace of God.

If thou yet alledge, that 'tis God's Work to comfort by his Spirit, who does it by inclining the heart to accept of his Tenders, which thou doſt not experience; but rather he renews thy Troubles and Diſquiets, by preſenting new Matter, or ſetting on the old; therefore ſhould'ſt thou aſſume to thy ſelf the Solace of the Promiſes; 'twould not be a Comfort of God's making, but thine own, and ſo a mere Fallacy put upon thy Conſcience.

I anſwer, 1. by Retort: If God do his part to encline thy heart to accept of Peace, but thou reſiſteſt him, and againſt his Will reſumeſt thy Troubles, and quencheſt thoſe Motions of his Spirit, that were intended to allay thy Diſquiets, and create Peace, whoſe is the Fault now? That this may be clear'd,

I anſwer, 2. That God's moral Motion is antecedent to, and leads *all Phyſical*, his or ours. For ſince he inclines in a way ſuitable to our Nature, as he himſelf, as we, and all rational Natures act, where the Mind and Reaſon leads the Will, and inclines it; therefore by preſenting Objects and Reaſons, urging and enforcing them by

by ſenſe and feeling of miſery, diſquiet of heart, and woe, God ſtrives with thy Will to move it freely, to embrace thoſe freely-offer'd Comforts, without which thou perceiveſt thy ſelf plainly to be ready to ſink into Horror and Deſpair. But thou againſt both divine Reaſon, and thine own Senſe, ſtiffly, irrationally, and malapartly refuſeſt to yield to either; and yet art ſo ſottiſh as to impute thy Frenzy to God. Avaunt Blaſphemy. If the mighty important Perſwaſives of Heaven cannot prevail upon thee as a Man, never imagine that the Almightineſs of God will miraculouſly drag thee as a Beaſt, or a Block, into that Paradiſe of Reſt and Satisfaction, which now thou ſtartleſt and trembleſt at. And underſtand that if thou be'ſt a Rebel againſt the Reaſon of God, thou wilt alſo be a Fighter againſt the Power of God. If a rational Mind act in repugnancy to his Wiſdom, much more will an irrational, brutiſh Will againſt his Omnipotence; there being leſs averſation in any Man to be ſubdu'd by the Golden Liberty of forcible Arguments, than the Iron-neceſſity of *Club-Law*.

The reſult is, that to refuſe divine Comforts when qualified for them, is an evident fighting againſt God, and to deny our Qualifications, when heartily grieved for, and undiſſembledly willing and active to divorce from, and never return to any thing diſpleaſing to *God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, and unfeignedly deſirous, and diligent to eſpouſe the Divine Intereſt in all things, without tergiverſation or delay: This is an apparent Rebellion and Lye againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and our own Souls; which, Oh my Soul, there is an abſolute neceſſity, that thou ſhould'ſt be much more afraid of, than thy mere imaginary Preſumption

ſumption in accepting that which is ſo clearly and freely tendered to thee by God. And what doſt thou mean herein, oh fooliſh and unkind to thy ſelf, oh ingrateful, and impious againſt God, that the wiſe, and rich, and ſweet Proviſions of Heaven, in boundleſs Compaſſions to thy Neceſſity and Miſery, laid at thy Feet, ſhould be trod in the Dirt? That thou wilt not vouchſafe to be ſo merciful to thy ſelf, and reſpectful to God, as to permit his healing Balms to be poured into thy bleeding Wounds; but in a blind Zeal againſt thy unworthy ſelf, or an over-righteous Revenge againſt thy abhorred Sins, or an humorous Peeviſhneſs, or Pertinacy of Spirit, or I know not what, woundeſt thoſe gracious Hands, which, in infinite Tenderneſs and Commiſeration, offer ſo benignly, by theſe moſt effectual Medicines againſt all Anxiety and Woe, to deliver thee out of thy wearisome Hoſpital, into an everlaſting Heaven of Pleaſure, Joy, Peace, Soundneſs, Safety, Reſt, and Conſolation? Oh thy Madneſs! to chuſe thy Miſeries and Vexations, rather than ſo bleſſed an hope, ſo unutterable Happineſs. What! be fond of Hell, and dote on thy Torment, and prefer thy Prelibations of eternal Plagues and Horrors, before theſe Earneſts of thoſe unſpeakably glorious, future Recompences? Is it not even ſo? This is and well may it be for a Lamentation.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XVII.

### *Inſtructive Inferences.*

WAving the *Corrective* Deductions, becauſe in part coincident with the *Elenctical*, as I have managed them, I ſhall cloſe all with the *Inſtructive*. And here, as all along I have done, I ſhall eſpecially direct about Spiritual Comfort, as the foundation of, and introductive to all other that's worthy of Name.

Every diſquieted Heart is melted into a paſſionate longing after Peace. If it can but ſee any dawnings of a lightſom day of Joy, after the gloomy night of its Troubles: If after all its tremulous Palpitations, and Paſſions, and Horrors, it may be ſupported with the Revivings of the leaſt glimmering Hope, that God will entertain any Thoughts of Reconciliation; it ſeems to glory in a willingneſs to be, or do any thing; to ſubmit to any Terms whatever, that may be conducible to this happy and amicable Cloſure. To promote this bleſſed End, and compromiſe of differences betwixt incenſed Heaven, and trembling, afflicted Souls, the *Son of God* hath done his part in the way of Mediation, as the *Father* hath done his, by revealing his Covenant and Promiſe, with the Terms upon which he will be at Peace, and his readineſs to embrace every one that ſubmits to them; both the Father and the Son have farther contributed towards this, by the Miſſion of the *Holy Ghoſt, the Comforter*, who waits in the Miniſtry of God's Word, and other Ordinances, to be gracious to unworthy Sinners, in illuminating their Minds, and bowing their Hearts and Wills, to comply

comply with the Will of God, and entertain Conditions of Peace, and accept of their own Mercy. God's Ministers also, under these divine Influences, take their Task in hand, as Instruments by way of Proposal, in explicating, and directing about these Terms; in propounding, offering, urging, counselling, perswading, exhorting to yield to them: And unworthy I, amongst the rest, would here contribute my Mite, to promote the Establishment of true and solid Consolation, in an endeavour to guide (doctrinally, as my Lord and Master does physically and efficaciously) poor wand'ring Feet into the *Psalmist*'s experimented way to Peace, as far as there are any Lineaments and Footsteps thereof in the Psalm; and this with all convenient brevity, because some of the Rules have upon other Occations offered themselves to Consideration.

1. *Be Men of Thoughts.* Exercise your selves in Meditation. As there can be no Discomfort, so neither Comfort, without a multitude of Thoughts. For if they only swim upon the Surface of the Mind, they will but introduce a superficial Trouble or Rest. Thoughts that sink, and soak in, go to the bottom, and reach the most intimate Recesses of the Soul (as the *Psalmist*'s, *in intimo meo*) Thoughts that stick by us, and are not easily shak'd off, but follow us night and day, these are most cumbersome or comfortable. Men of desultory Minds, that cannot settle their Cogitations, but rove, and ramble, and skip like a Squirrel from Bough to Bough, from Tree to Tree, are here, and there, and every where, throughout all the Ramifications of Thoughts, yet no where fix'd; as a Weather-cock may now face a blustering Storm, and in a moment the sweet and re-

freshing Sun, but never feel any thing, never tast any durable Disquiets or Joys. Lay up therefore a good Stock before-hand of heart-relieving Considerations, as an Antidote to all sadning, molesting Passions. This no doubt was the *Psalmist*'s Practice. Those reviving Meditations, which he afterward digested into this Psalm, did dwell in his mind before, in, and upon the first Assaults of his Trouble, and did their Work within him before he committed this Narrative to Writing. What he felt then, he here discovers. 'Twould be nauseous to recollect and repeat here those Cogitations, which I have all this while been observing out of the Psalm, that influenced his troubled heart, and established it in Peace; tedious to make new Observations throughout the Psalm, where they very plentifully occur. I shall only therefore take notice of a few Verses, and I cannot furnish you with a richer Treasury of pertinent, calming, comforting Thoughts, than are presented in *Ver.* 12, *&c.* Take it according to the Translation. *Blessed is the Man whom thou chast'nest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy Law.* 13. *That thou may'st give him Rest from the days of Adversity, until the Pit be digged for the Wicked.* 14. *For the Lord will not cast off his People, neither will he forsake his Inheritance.* 15. *But Judgment shall return unto Righteousness, and all the Upright in heart shall follow it.* Here we behold the Condition of Man, troublous under chast'ning: But,

1. 'Tis comfortable in that 'tis only Child-like Discipline, as the Word both in Hebrew and Greek imports, and therefore proceeds from the Wisdom, Heart, Love, and compassionate Bowels of a Father. There cannot be more smart in the Rod, which is at the worst but a finite Evil, than there is

is ſweet in the *Love* that manages it, and is of an infinite Vertue and Satisfactorineſs. Then ſence and feeling of that, is bitter and grievous, but the importance moſt pleaſing and delectable. How lamentable would thy Caſe be, ſhould the Lord ſpare the Rod, and leave thee to harden thy ſelf in thy evil Manners; that is, forbear all Deſignings for thy good, that thy Damnation may become more inevitable, and ſuperſede his Corrections preventive of thy Sins and Woes, that Hell may the more certainly devour and conſume thee? Happy Croſs, that is an Index of the good Will of God, that is a demonſtration that thou art a Child of God, *Heb.* 12. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

2. 'Tis a bleſſed thing to be chaſtized, the greateſt Curſe to be forborn, as a Token of being devoted to everlaſting Curſes. God has not pardoned thoſe he does not puniſh; no, their Guilt eſcapes a preſent Reckoning, becauſe the Righteous Judge intends to pay them home in another World. If thy Father in Heaven forbear thee not, 'tis becauſe he hath forgiven thee the eternal Penalty; and that's a bleſſed thing indeed, *Pſal.* 32. 1, 2. Sin muſt ſmart; if thou be'ſt made to feel its Evil by Corrections now, 'tis to prevent the more grievous Pains of another Life. God deſigns thy good by bringing upon thee theſe Evils, *Heb.* 12. 10. and his Purpoſes can never admit of a fruſtration.

3. Theſe Chaſtenings are only a burthen laid upon one, who by Grace is, or ſhall be made ſtrong, or mighty, to bear and improve them. 'Tis not *Adam Earthly* Man, nor *Enoſh ſickly, weak* Man, but [*Haggeber*] the ſtrong, *mighty* Man, with an *Emphaſis*, whom God picks out to bleſs with his Chaſtenings. If they

הַגֶּבֶר *from* גָּבַר *Emphat.* & *prævaluit, robuſtus fuit.*

do not find him ſo, they ſhall be Means of Grace to make him ſo; *God who is Faithful* (and that ſuppoſes a Promiſe) *will not ſuffer to be tempted above ability, but with the Temptation will alſo make a way to eſcape, that he may be able to bear it,* 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. Be thou never ſo weak, diffident, deſponding in thy ſelf; yet if God call thee out to Affliction, thou art ſtrong, not in thy ſelf, but in him; he is with thee, *Pſal.* 23. 4. *Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the ſhadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me: Thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.* Here's ſtrong Confidence, ſtrong Support, and it had a ſtrong Foundation, *Ver.* 3. *He reſtoreth my Soul, he leadeth me in the Paths of Righteouſneſs, for his Names ſake,* Reſtoring, turning again, *Pſal.* 60. 1. bringing back (*Ezek.* 38. 8.) the Soul, and leading it. ſtrengthens it to do or ſuffer any thing. *Iſai.* 41. 9, 10, 13. *Thou art my Servant, I have choſen thee, and not caſt thee away*; which being laid as a Foundation, then, 10. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy God, I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my Righteouſneſs.* 13. *I, the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, ſaying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee,* &c. *Deut.* 33. 26. *There is none like unto the God of* Jeſurun, *who rideth upon the Heaven in thy help, and in his Excellency on the Sky. The Eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the Everlaſting Arms.* He is a mighty Man indeed who thus, under chaſtening, is ſupported by the Almighty Power of God.

4. 'Tis *Jehovah*, the Performer of Promiſes, that chaſtizes; and therefore his chaſtening it ſelf, is not the Execution of the Old-Covenant Threatning to a Child of God, but a fulfilling of

a

a New-Covenant Promiſe. *Pſal.* 89. *If the Children of him whom God makes his First-born, Ver.* 27. *and his Throne as the days of Heaven, Ver.* 29. *do forſake my Law, &c. Ver.* 30. *Then will I viſit their Tranſgreſſion with the Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes.* I call this a Promiſe, not a Threat, nor a bare Aſſeveration (becauſe inſerted as Matter of Privilege, amidſt a Cluſter of Promiſes, true in a ſence of *David*, but redounding to Chriſt and his Children and Seed, *Heb.* 2. 13. *Iſ.* 53. 10.) But (as to *Iſrael* in *Ægypt*, ſo) to all his ſpiritual *Iſrael*, when in their moſt grievous Agonies and Oppreſſions, he reveals himſelf by his Name *Jehovah*, in a peculiar manner: For to no Condition are more Promiſes made, to none more fulfill'd. 'Tis a bleſſed thing indeed, under all the moſt doleful Circumſtances of Providence, to inherit in *Jehovah* all the Promiſes. In this art thou richer under the very depth of Poverty and Diſtreſs, than in the Gain of infinite Worlds.

5. God's Corrections are Inſtructions; the Word ſignifies both; and however to the Children of God, they are inſeparable. If God thus teach, with a ſtrong Hand, he will alſo teach out of his Law. *Job* 34. 31, 32. *Elihu* there accounts it a very proper Petition, *Surely it is meet to be ſaid to God, I have born Chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more; what I ſee not, teach thou me: If I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.* Therefore *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 71. profeſſes, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes.* Our bleſſed Redeemer was in this an excellent Pattern, *Heb.* 5. 8. *Though he were a Son, yet learned he Obedience by the things which he ſuffered.* And God Almighty declares his confident expectation of this from his People, *Zeph.* 3. 7. *I ſaid,*

*ſurely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive Inſtruction,* (which ſuppoſes ſome to give it) *ſo their dwelling ſhould not be cut off, howſoever I puniſhed them.* Indeed if then our Ears be not opened to Diſcipline, and our Inſtruction ſealed, when God ſets on his teachings with Blows, we are very bad Scholars. But *Mic.* 6. 9. *The Lords Voice* (the voice of his Rod) *cryeth unto the City, and Wiſdom ſhall ſee thy Name, hear ye the Rod,* (the Lord's voice in it) *and him that hath appointed it.*

6. *God chaſtens in order to Reſt. Reſt from Adverſity, and the Days of Adverſity. Reſt not merited, but given, and given by* Jehovah, that can command it, who is a ſelf-mover, and free in his Communications, and when in thee there's nothing to be a motive to his Bounty, can and does take Arguments from himſelf. Thy Miſeries ſhall have an end, and a happy end. They ſhall iſſue in that which is an earneſt and pledge of the higheſt Happineſs, *Reſt, Everlaſting Reſt.* Thy Week-day Labours, and Sorrows, and Sufferings, ſhall terminate in a bleſſed *Sabbatiſm*; even in this Life if God ſee it good, however in the Life to come, God will give it, and then who can withhold it?

7. All the while thou art in Miſery thou liveſt under diſtinguiſhing Mercy. Thou art not ranked with the Wicked, nor reſerv'd for their Woes. In chaſtening thee God differences thee from them, who though they live in a Paradiſe of Proſperity, yet even there (as *Adam*) are digging their own Graves, and burying all their good Fortunes. Whilſt the Lord chaſtens thee out of thy Sins they are ſinning themſelves into Plagues, beyond the dimenſion of Chaſtenings. Thou art only carryed through a bleſſed Purgatory, they into

into and left in the Pit of Perdition, which their own Sins and God's Juſtice are preparing for them; and thy Sufferings ſhall laſt no longer, than till their Iniquities be full, and the Pit made ready to receive them, in which work both their own Wickedneſs, and Divine Vengeance make haſt. *Their Foot ſhall ſlide in due time, for the day of their Calamity is at hand, and the things that ſhall come upon them make haſt. For the Lord ſhall judge his People, and repent himſelf for his Servants, when he ſeeth that their Power is gone, and there is none ſhut up or left*, Deut. 32. 35, 36. *Rejoyce, O ye Nations therefore with his People*, Ver. 43. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God of Hoſts, Oh my People that dwelleſt in Zion, be not afraid of the Aſſyrian, He ſhall ſmite thee with a Rod, and ſhall lift up his Staff againſt thee after the manner of Ægypt. For yet a very little while and the Indignation ſhall ceaſe and mine Anger in their Deſtruction*, Iſa. 10. 24, 25.

8. Thy Affliction is not unto Rejection and Deſertion, as in the Wicked. *The Lord will not caſt off and forſake, though he chaſten*, ver. 14. no, but own and return unto his Servants. Although he may ſometimes ſeem to depart, yet 'tis with yerning Bowels, and a returning Heart, and the reaſon of this is that

9. He owns his Propriety, even when he corrects. They are *his People, his Inheritance*, an Inheritance that cannot, that ſhall not be alienated. The Devil and Wicked Men may by God's Permiſſion uſurp and make a forcible Intruſion and Entry, but the legal Right abides with God, and he will infallibly recover it, in his own way and time. Joh. 10. 27, 28, 29. *My Sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them Eternal Life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither*

*ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no Man is able to pluck them out of my Fathers hand.*

10. *The Lord will be thy Patron and Advocate*, to plead thy Righteous cauſe, that although Judgment be departed from Righteouſneſs, *i. e.* Unrighteous Judgment be paſt againſt thee, yet God will turn the Scales, and cauſe Judgment at length to weigh thee in a right Balance, and ſentence ſhall be given on thy ſide.

11. Thy Affliction ſhall iſſue in Honour and Advancement. When God exalts Righteouſneſs thou ſhalt be with it, follow after it, have like fare with it; whether it be done in this World or the future. If in this Life you continue under theſe Depreſſions, yet the honour of a glorious Kingdom is reſerved for you at that day, *when Judgment ſhall infallibly return to Righteouſneſs.*

*Laſtly*, Hence it highly concerns you to conſider, and ſearch into your Hearts, that you may know your own *Uprightneſs* and *Righteouſneſs*, for upon this depends all. None of theſe Privileges appertain to Hypocrites, or wicked Perſons in State. But no ſincere Soul ſhall fail of obtaining them, in one kind or other. Let your thoughts therefore be much imploy'd within. Reflect upon your ſelves and ſee what title you have to ſo rich Bleſſings. If you can approve your ſelves in Integrity to God, you ſhall have Comfort and Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory, (even in and under your ſoreſt Tryals) from the experience of Divine Goodneſs in all theſe Particulars. Buſie therefore your Meditations mainly about this. Dive into the bottom of your own Hearts, to ſee whether any hid Treaſure lie there. Never give your Thoughts reſt till they either find it, or bring

it.

it. You are undone, if Afflictions meet you rotten at Heart. Take no content in any thing, lay out your Thoughts about nothing elſe, till thy bring you in the aſſurance that there is a ſound root of Grace planted in your Souls. Let your Minds perpetually work this way. All thoughts will be, cannot but be troubling, perplexing, till they be ſanctified by a Principle of Divine Life. Therefore,

2. Endeavour to gain Ability to give Law to your Thonghts, and duly to govern them. A Man can never enjoy Peace till he can command at home. Unruly Rebel Thoughts will ever be creating new Broyls. Maſter your Thoughts by Thoughts. Nothing is more imperious or impotent. Maſculine generous Cogitations poſſeſs a kind of Omnipotency, nothing can reſiſt them. Engage your Minds about important matters, and engage them thorowly, and thoſe Meditations will obtain the Empire. To think ſeriouſly of God, his Attributes and Providence, and dwell thereon; to take a full view of the *Love and Bloodſhed of the Son of God*, his Covenant and the Proviſions of it, to conſider and weigh thorowly the Curſedneſs and Offenſiveneſs of Sin, the Glory of a vertuous Heart and Life; to take a due proſpect of the Terrour of Death, Judgment and Hell, and the Bleſſedneſs and everlaſting Joys of Heaven is the beginning of that Wiſdom, which alone will over-rule your Hearts for God. Reflections upon theſe things will break in with ſuch an Emphaſis, Energy, and Awe upon your Conſciences, that vain and evil Cogitations cannot bear up againſt them, but will be ſuppreſt and daſh'd out of Countenance. The *Pſalmiſt* with one of theſe Conſiderations, *viz.* that of the *Divine, all-*

*penetrating*

*penetrating Eye of Providence*, ſuppos'd himſelf an overmatch for, and able as with *a ſmooth Stone out of the Brook*, to ſtrike dead the barbarous profligate *Goliahs*, that rag'd in the devaſtation and ſlaughter of the *Heritage of the Lord*, Ver. 5,6,7,8,9,10,11. And what will not a multitude of ſuch Thoughts effect upon an attentive and inclinable Mind and Conſcience, where they are made Familiar, Domeſtick, and Perpetual Companions? If hereby thou attaineſt to victory over frothy, vile, corrupt Thoughts, that they dare no more make Inſurrections; a foundation is laid for an entire conqueſt over diſconſolate Thoughts, which are their Off-ſpring, acknowledging none other Original, but live, move and have their being in them. For nothing hath power to diſcompoſe us, till it firſt corrupt us. Sin firſt pollutes, then pains us. Till our Conſciences be wounded by it, they do not, cannot rationally worry us. Prevent the offence againſt God and you bind Conſcience to the Good-behaviour, and ſo to the Peace. Remove the Provocation to Heaven by true Repentance, and you put an end to, and *non-ſuit* the quarrels of Conſcience. Now this is done by nothing more effectually than by Thoughts. Indeed nothing can do it but by the inſtrumentality of Thoughts. When good Thoughts counterwork evil, then will refreſhing, ſolacing Thoughts overcome and eject diſquieting.

Make this then, Oh my Soul, thy firſt care, to ſet up God in thy Thoughts, to over-rule and guide them. Erect a Throne in thy Mind for the Son of God, give him there the ſole power of the *Militia of Peace and War*, and then amongſt other Oppoſers *every thought will be brought into captivity*

to

*to the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. If thy Thoughts acknowledge no external Soveraign, they will be ungovernable; without foreign aid too hard for thee. There is a Prince, the Prince of the Power of the Air, who hath already usurpt and rules in the corrupt part of thy Mind, and leads thy Thoughts into rebellion against, and disobedience to *that* which is the true Law of thy Mind, the remaining Principles of the Light and Law of Nature within thee, and also the Light and Law of the *Spirit of Life in the Scriptures.* And these two *Satan* and the corruption of thy Mind, are odds to the reliques of the Divine Image in thee. 'Tis therefore of absolute necessity, that a higher Prince be admitted, *The King of Glory, The Prince of Peace, to expel that strong One, and keep thy Mind stayed in himself, that it may be kept in perfect Peace*, Isa 26. 3. Let God have a *Primacy of order*, as well as *Supremacy* in thy Thoughts. Thus the *Psalmist* here, the first thing in his Mind and Mouth is God. Let him so be in all thy Thoughts. Season and Sanctifie, sweeten all thy other Meditations with thoughts of God. So He, likewise in this Psalm, [*viz. God*] fills up all, and is at every end and turn, in the Holy Man's Memory and Contemplations. That Thought which forgets and leaves out *God*, may let in *Satan*. Begin then, proceed, and end with *God*. This all prescribe, even *Heathens*.

*In one thing delight and quiet thy self*, viz. *to pass from one publick Action to another, with remembrance of God.* Mark. Ant.

Ἐνὶ τέρπου καὶ προσαναπαύου τὸ ἀπὸ πράξεως κοινωνικῆς μεταβαίνειν ἐπὶ πρᾶξιν κοινωνικὴν, σὺν μνήμῃ Θεοῦ, Marc. Antonin. *Lib.* 6. §. 7.

*The*

Μέγας ὁ ἀγὼν ὅδε, θεῖον τὸ ἔργον, ὑπὲρ βασιλείας, ὑπὲρ ἐλευθερίας, &c. τῦ Θεῦ μέμνησο, &c. Arrian. *Lib.* 2. *Cap.* 18.

*The conflict is great, the work divine, it concerns a Kingdom, it concerns Liberty,* &c. *Be mindful of God,* &c. Epictet.

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεθα, καὶ εἰς Διὰ λήγωμεν, Μῦσαι. Theocr. Idyl. 17.

Ab Jove Principium, *Virg. Eccl.* 3

Ἀρχὴν ἁπάντων καὶ τέλος πίστει Θεόν. Gr. Naz. in Acroſtic.

*Nazianzen* more Chriſtianly gives the ſenſe of *Theocritus* and *Virgil.*

*Make God the beginning and end of all things.*

*I need no more.*

Conſideration then is the beginning of Conſolation. Meditation is the Medicine of the Mind, to heal its ſickly, becauſe diſorderly, turbulent, unruly Paſſions. If thou wilt not, O my Soul, oblige thy ſelf to it, thou ſtifleſt thy Peace in the Birth, or ſtrangleſt it in the Cradle, and adopteſt thy Diſquiets a new, as if in Love with thine own Woe. But then if thou canſt not guide and rule thy Thoughts, if thou canſt not direct them to proper Subjects, and call them off from ſuch as are unſuitable, if they will be *Lords* and *Maſters*, and run without bidding in a licentious Imperiouſneſs, from one thing to another, and be no where fixt, they will get advantage by nothing; according to the Proverb of the *Rowling Stone.* Therefore

*Primum argumentum compoſitæ mentis exiſtimo, poſſe conſiſtere, & ſecum morari.* Seneca, Ep. 2.

*Command thy ſelf in chief*, is a good Monition of Mr. *Herbert.* If thou loſeſt the regiment of thine own Mind, and canſt not bridle the exorbitances of thy Thoughts, bring them to a beck, like one in *Authority* keeping them under controul; and if thou haſt not a good ſtock of profitable

ſitable matter, treaſured up in thy Memory, to entertain them with at all times, maintaining thy Juriſdiction and Dominion over them, to be able to divorce and divert them from any thing, to any thing, thou canſt never live in Tranquillity and Peace. Thoſe Cogitations that break the pale, and run out of courſe, will ſtill be creating Civil Wars, and Combuſtions among thy Paſſions, and interrupt the Serenity of thy Conſcience.

Hence it is that Meditation is not the immediate duty of, nor proper for the conſtitutionally Melancholick, whoſe temper it is to be too cogitabund, and their Diſeaſe to be altogether unable to biaſs their Thoughts, and to be too willing to lay out thoſe Cogitations rather upon any thing than what is Joyous and Comforting. Let ſuch make uſe of other Mens Thoughts, rather that their own, and be more in Company and Conference, than Solitude and Soliloquies. 'Tis dangerous riding in that Chariot, where there will be no other Company than the *Prince of Darkneſs*; and *Melancholy* by ſome is call'd the *Devil's Chariot*. 'Tis oftner managed by an Evil Spirit than a Good, therefore 'tis no Wiſdom for a Man to truſt himſelf with it alone. And if trouble of Heart for Sin degenerate into it, as ſometimes it does, 'tis good to ſet a guard upon it, to live under Inſpection. A Man can never keep himſelf ſecure from Sins or Sorrows, that hath none to keep his Houſe but a dumpiſh Mind. Think thou, but not too much, that thy Thoughts do not ſwallow thee up, as they will if that black humour prevail within. Get a guide for thy Thoughts,

*Nemo eſt ex imprudentioribus qui relinqui ſibi debeat.* Seneca *Ep.* 10.

Thoughts, least they misguide thee into Darkness. And for that end,

3. *Get a clear practical notion of God.* This was the *Psalmist*'s great relief. In every Distress he could find an accommodate suitable Satisfaction and Solace in God. Did the Wicked rage and revel in the Blood of Innocents? His Faith beholds a revenging Hand ready to execute Judgment for them. Did those presumptuous *Deists*, incourage themselves in Cruelty by renouncing Divine Providence? He understands and convinces them, that it supervises all, even to the very thoughts of the Heart. Did he feel the treachery and failure of Friends on Earth? He both knew and found a never failing Friend and Helper in Heaven, *&c.* In every Trouble and Exigence he meets with God. Now had he been unacquainted with his Nature and Perfections we should have seen nothing of all this; and then in what deplorable Circumstances would he have found himself, under those surrounding Calamities? Whence could he have taken any Encouragement? Let us take a view of Men making no such Reflections, and therefore its likely but little acquainted with such Notions. And the Instance shall be in his own Companions, 1 *Sam.* 30. 3. *David* and his Men return to *Ziklag*, find it burnt with Fire, their *Sons* and *Daughters* taken Captives; wherefore, *ver.* 4. *They lifted up their Voice and wept, till they had no more power to weep.* Ver. 6. *And* David *was in great distress, for the People spake of stoning him, because the Soul of the People was bitter, every Man for his Sons and for his Daughters.* Here was wild work. What fury of Passion, first in *Grief*, next in *Rage*; first they swelt in Tears, then would swim in Blood; and what

what would they have been the nearer? To ſuch Exceſſes will the frenzy of a drunken Appetite lead Men, that are ignorant of God, or entertain no ſerious Conſiderations of his Excellencies, and their concern in the Government of the World. Now behold, did not an other Spirit rule in *David*, a Man acquainted with God? Yes, a brave Heroical Spirit, *Ver.* 6. David *encouraged* [*fortified, garriſon'd*] *himſelf in the Lord his God.* Mark, His knowledge of God, and Intereſt in God, now mightily bore up his Heart, and ſtood him in very good ſtead, elſe might his Spirits have ſunk with theirs. But whilſt they were impotent through *effeminate* or *diabolical Paſſion*, he was ſtrong in God. Their puling and peeviſhneſs, did emaſculate their Hearts, and melt them into Puſillanimity and Cowardice, that they did not dare to confront and face this preſent hardſhip: but he became Couragious and Valiant in God, ſo as with an undaunted, maſculine Fortitude, and greatneſs of Mind, to triumph over, and outface the imminent Storm, and work his way through it, though with redoubled Violence, from both Enemies and Friends, it ruſh'd upon him.

And truly ſince all our Comfort is originally, and eminently, and conſummately in God, 'tis impoſſible to enjoy any ſound Quiet, and Heart-eaſe, under ignorance of him. For how ſhould a Man be able to draw and derive Comfort from he knows not what? But if he ſee that fulneſs of all delectable Joys in God, which are all-ſufficient to relieve his Mind, and compenſate his ſoreſt Troubles, (as the Love of God in Chriſt will) and contemplate, ſtudy, and dwell upon that infiniteneſs of Soul-ſatisfying Good, till the inviting

inviting amiableness ravish his Desires, command his Delight, engage his Soul in the most vigorous pursuit and endeavours to gain an Interest therein; he shall not fail to obtain that sweet reviving Solace and Peace, in the most acceptable season, which will place him as in a corner of Heaven. Our Sorrows are more than half remov'd, when we gain a sight of their most efficacious Remedies. If a Man at unawares have drunk Poyson, 'tis no small satisfaction to see and be sure of a prevalent Antidote. Despair is the sting of Miseries. Be the Storms and Surges never so high, and beat upon us with seemingly the most fatal Violence, yet if our Hope can but meet with any Anchor-hold, if we can gain a sight of Land, if we behold a sufficiency of Help and Security there, our Despondencies only are Shipwrack'd, we escape. Those Hopes can never perish that steer towards Heaven. If our Course be guided with an Eye upon the Star, 'tis safe. But *Psal.* 73. 26. if the very Heart despair, and Hope be sunk, yet that case cannot be desperate, that's under-taken by God. *Almighty Love* is never at a loss, either in Ability or Will, to succour those whom it once Embraces; which if we understand, *neither our Help, nor our Hope, can perish from the Lord.* Fix therefore thine Eye here.

In summ, *God is all in all*, in him (if we will but oblige our selves thereto) may we behold infinitely more than enough to still the raging of our troubled Minds, and all engaged in Covenant to meet us more than half way. *Pardon of Sin, Propriety in God*, are there promised, and least we should object incapacity to enjoy and be happy in so rich and glorious Blessings, 'tis added

as

as the Crown of all that he will diſpoſe and prepare our Hearts for it, by engraving thereon his Holy Laws, by that means perfectly removing all obſtructions to our Hopes, and occaſions of our Fears, that with a full aſſurance we may enter upon our Inheritance, of his Everlaſting Conſolations. This he hath moſt plainly revealed, this he does moſt fully accompliſh to his choſen Servants. If we be partakers of his Nature and Image, through the Law of the Spirit of Life in our Hearts, ſetting us free from the Law of Sin and Death, all is our own; and how is it poſſible for him that knows all this, that really believes and feels it, by any ſcruples and jealouſies to make his Life miſerable.

Diſpel then, Oh my Soul, thoſe Clouds and Miſts that benight thy Underſtanding, thereby turning the Day in thy Will and Affections into Darkneſs. Endeavour to open the Windows, that the Glory of God, in the Face of Chriſt, may ſhine upon thee with a powerful Ray, to warm, impregnate and ſpirit thee, with a new divine Fervour, Strength and Life. Study the Scriptures which are a bright Beam of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, a fair Pourtraicture of that Eternal, Eſſential Word of God, who is the *Brightneſs of his Father's Glory*, the *expreſs Image of his Perſon*. Let thy Mind in its Meditation dwell continually here with delight. To ruminate hereupon Day and Night, is the true method to attain the ſoundeſt Wiſdom, even that which is *Eternal Life*, conſiſting in the *ſaving, effectual, transforming, experimental, practical, fruitional knowledge of the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent. This is Wiſdom unto Salvation, through Faith in Chriſt Jeſus.*

*Joh.* 17. 3.
2 *Tim.* 3. 15.

*Jeſus.* Be thy Intellectuals as bright as thoſe of an Angel of Light in other things, ſo as to underſtand all *Myſteries*, *Philoſophical*, *Political*, *Theological*, yet if thou here be in the dark, thou art but a Hell, which though in its *Phyſical* being ſurrounded with Heaven, yet is at the greateſt moral diſtance from it, and therefore no wonder if thou never ſeeſt the day break of Joy, and Reſt, and Peace. *Ignorance* which ſome account the Mother of *Devotion* (but is indeed of *Damnation*) is alway pregnant with Diſquiets, Troubles, Fears. *The Night is full of Terrors*, Cant. 3. 8. *Lucretius* adds, *As Children by Night, ſo Men fear in the Light.* But *Seneca* corrects him, "*We make all* "*things darkneſs to our ſelves*; "*we ſee nothing, neither what's* "*hurtful, nor what's profitable, yet ramble on without* "*Pauſe or Prudence. What a mad thing is Impetu-* "*ouſneſs in the dark.* ——*But if we will the Day* "*may dawn:* And thus, *If a Man will let in the* "*knowledge of things Humane and Divine, not merely* "*to be daſh'd, but dyed with it again and again, re-* "*cognizing, recollecting what he knows; if he examine* "*what is truly good and evil, what falſly, if he en-* "*quire what's Honeſt, what's Filthy, and what is* "*Providence.* What can be ſpoke more wiſely, more truly. This he preſcribes as a Remedy againſt Fear, which he makes the Daughter of Tradition rather than Truth. A wiſe Man (and then he muſt be good, for Wickedneſs is Madneſs and Folly) fears nothing ſlaviſhly. For nothing is formidable but to Ignorance, falſe Opinion, Improvidence and Wickedneſs.

*Omnia nobis fecimus tenebras; nihil videmus, &c.* Sen *Ep.* 110.

*Nemo noſtrum quid veri eſſet excuſſit & metum alter alteri tradidit*, ib.

Fix

Fix thy ſelf therefore, Oh my Soul, upon the right Baſis *of Truth*, leading to Goodneſs, and thou art above Gun-ſhot. Nothing can hurt thee, if it do not firſt debauch thee, thy Mind with undue Sentiments, and thy Heart thereby with corrupt Notions, nothing can diſquiet thee, till it debaſe and abuſe firſt thy Judgment, and thy Conſcience by it. Good Intellectuals will promote good Morals. Entertain high, noble and worthy Conceptions of God, and every thing that guides to God, and this will ſingularly conduce to thy ſecurity againſt Vice, and to thy eſtabliſhment in Vertue, and thereby in tranquility of Mind. For two things concur to ſolid Conſolation, clearneſs of Apprehenſions, and calmneſs of Conſcience: Serenity above, Tranquility below. The worſt of Men may have the one, none but the godly wiſe have both. The Devil has Light enough in his Underſtanding, though he be the *Prince of Darkneſs*, his Notions are ſublime, but Peace has he none. A dreadful Storm may rage in the Conſcience, when the Sun ſhines clear in the Mind; Men of great Parts and Gifts, and deep Heads, have not alway the quieteſt Hearts. *The ſimple Unlearned*, ſaith one, *riſe up and take Heaven by Violence, whilſt we with all our Learning drop down into Hell.*' Tis well if more Scholars be not found in Hell than Heaven.' Tis not how much, but how well a Man knows that is conducible to Peace. On the other hand the Tempeſt may be huſh'd, and Conſcience charm'd to a ſtilneſs, but then the Heavens above are dark and cloudy, and a new Storm ſleeps in its cauſes, if thou be an Enemy to God. The Witneſs within may be gagg'd a while that it cannot ſpeak out, The Lion chain'd and muzzled in his Den, that it cannot worry thee, but afterward

terward it will be let loose upon thee, arm'd with the greater fury, perhaps even in this Life; and it is more tolerable to be lug'd into Goodness, by a snarling, snatching, tearing Conscience now, than have all thy Bones broke and devoured by it, and the roaring Lion of Hell in his den of everlasting Darkness. Wo, wo be to that Man that never wanted, or was without rest and quiet in his Mind. A dumb Conscience is a dark one, and *If the Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness?* If nothing within thee did ever proclaim War, nothing has right to speak Peace. He that never saw God as an Enemy, never yet saw Him as a Friend. If thou be ignorant of thy own State, thou are ignorant of God, unacquainted with his Peace, with his Joy. Thus, Oh my Soul, if thou be'st ambitious to enjoy any real approvable quietness in thy Mind, thou must maintain in it clearness of Notion concerning God. But although there be Light in the Heavens, it may suffer an Eclipse (or rather thou dost, for the Light leaves not the Sun, but the Earth) if thy Corruptions, as an opaque Body interpose. Wickedness in the Heart opposes the efficacy of our Notions of God, that although we retain them, we are no better for them, therefore 'twould be better for us were we without them. None lie deeper in outer Darkness, than those that ascend highest in Light and Knowledge in this Life, but improve it not. *He that knows his Master's Will, and does it not, (and so his Master and loves him not) shall be beaten with many stripes.* Our Passions are proportionable to our Sensations. The more enlarged our Minds are, the more enlarged are our Hearts to receive Comfort from our raised Speculations, if we conscionably improve them; but

but if not, ſo much the more Anguiſh, Vexation and Torment. He that knows moſt of God, knows moſt to torture and rack his Conſcience for ever, if like a Devil, he notwithſtanding it, rebel againſt God. If thy Illuminations do not warm thy Affections of Deſire and Love, they will awaken thoſe bitter Paſſions of Fear, Grief, Horror, and Deſpair, as anticipations and earneſts of Everlaſting Woes.

Labour therefore to ſuperadd to thy knowledge of God a true Notion of thy ſelf, and thine own eſtate, abſolute and relative, of the latter by the former. For by what thou feeleſt thy ſelf to be in thy ſelf, muſt thou judge what thou art in relation to God; and thus thy inward ſenſe muſt bottom thy Faith, *i. e.* thou mayſt have good ground to believe that God has *juſtified, pardoned, accepted, adopted thee, and will ſave thee*, if thou feeleſt by inward ſenſe, that he hath *Regenerated and Sanctified thee.* Thus the *Pſalmiſt* ere he claim Propriety in God, *ver.* 22. lays the Foundation of that Aſſurance in Conſcience of *Innocency and Righteouſneſs, ver.* 21. Admit this to be meant of particular limited *doing harm to none, good to all*, or only to the *Concern'd*, viz. *his Enemies, that ſought his Life:* Yet ſince 'twas ſuch as could approve it ſelf to God, 'twill infer univerſal. For particular Juſtice, *&c.* is not to be pleaded before God, if it be but *Hypocritical*; and ſuch it is, if its Principles, Motives, Ends, be unſound. But if theſe be ſound, they will certainly be Introductive of, nay they are *Univerſal Righteouſneſs*: That is, if *Love to God and Goodneſs, reſpect to his Will and Command, and an Eye to his Glory*, lead and induce thee to Act, and regulate thee in harmleſſneſs, and juſt dealing with Men; they will not permit

thee to rest there, but with the same Efficacy and generous Violence urge and command thee into *Sobriety* and *Godlyness*: Yea Love to God and Goodness, is eminently both. Particular Justice then without Universal is mere *Hypocrisie*, and upon a bottom so base, so weak, so sandy, no wise Man dare build the confidence to say, *My God*, no nor arrogate to himself a privilege of so noble and eminent a Nature, no nor lastly would a serious Considerer so much as dare to mention Innocency and Righteousness toward Man, in a solemn Address to God, without a secret check from his own Conscience for, and a serious deprecation anent his own Injustice, and Nocency before the *Divine Majesty*; had he not some inward Testimony of his Uprightness. We will then adventure to suppose, this carriage toward Man to be only an instance of that *Catholick Sincerity*, whereof the *Psalmist* was an excellent *Pattern*, and mentioned as an aggravating Circumstance, inhancing the guilt of these Persecutors that *brake in Pieces God's People*, *ver.* 3. *Viz.* That they did this without any manner of Provocation, merely out of Malice against their Goodness and Relation to God, and him in particular, only upon false and ungrounded surmises.

However this be 'tis certain, that if a Man do not partake of the *Divine Nature*, *in Holiness*, *in Faith*, *Vertue*, *Knowledge*, *Temperance*, *Patience*, *Godliness*, *Brotherly Kindness*, *Love*, *he can never make his Calling and Election sure*, 2 Pet. 1. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10. *i. e.* except a Man know God experimentally in having his Image renew'd upon his Soul, he can never know God comfortably in any true assurance of his Love and Favour, and pardoning Grace; therefore never solace himself with the being, much

much leſs *abundance of Peace.* Thus then if thou know'ſt not God, thou knoweſt not thy ſelf; if thou know'ſt not thy ſelf, thou knoweſt not God. Here therefore, Oh my Soul, lay out thine endeavours and cares, to get a true underſtanding of thy ſtate, whether truly Sanctified. Thou haſt no true peace if not born again to it. Get a diſtinct notion concerning the *New Birth* in general, and thine own in particular: For thou haſt nothing to do with any thing in God, if thou be'ſt not again *begotten of God.*

*Laſtly*, Endeavour to attain a clear notion of *the Covenant of Grace*, its Nature, terms, and Obligation. For, be there never ſo much Comfort in God, and never ſo much need, and diſpoſedneſs in thee for it; yet what can make God ſo far a Debtor to thee, as to neceſſitate him to beſtow it on thee, if he do not oblige himſelf thereto? To that Covenant then do'ſt thou owe all thy right unto, and hopes of enjoying God, and his Conſolations. If thou found not thy confidence there, 'tis loſt, and thy ſelf alſo. No wiſe Man will neglect the peruſal of thoſe Deeds, by which he holds his Inheritance. Thy Comforts are indeed but only *Copy-hold*, look to it.

4. I adviſed to endeavour a clear underſtanding of thine abſolute ſtate of *Sanctification*, under the preceeding Particular, upon Suppoſition of ſuch a ſtate in Being. But, what if it be not? *Non entis nulla eſt ſcientia.* We know not that which is not. Leaſt therefore an error be found in the very Foundation of all, in that which above all things is moſt eſſential to, and differential of true Comfort, my next Rule is about that.

*Make ſure that thou be converted from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God.* Lay

the Ground Work of thy Peace in true Penitence. For as *Seneca*, *Fideliſſimus ad honeſta, ex Pœnitentia tranſitus.* I ſubjoyn, *ad ſolantia.* Repentance moſt undeceivingly leads to honeſty and peace. Thou canſt never paſs by Land to Paradiſe, but by Water, the *Sea of godly Sorrow.* The *Laver* muſt ſtand betwixt the Tent and the Altar; waſh thou muſt, ere thou canſt make Atonement with the *Pſalmiſt*; thou muſt be righteous and innocent ere God revive thee. *The Wiſdom that deſcends from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable*; Jam. 3. 17. None but the *Eagle* can face the Sun. A *Salamander* cannot ſubſiſt in Water, nor a Fiſh in Fire: Nothing that is unholy can live in the Element of everlaſting Light, Joy, and Reſt: None but a true and honeſt Heart muſt be bleſt with a Heaven of unperiſhable Conſolation: God will not juſtifie and encourage Wickedneſs, by the entail of true Contentation; nor appropriate the Portion of his Friends to his Enemies. *Give the Childrens Bread to Dogs*; neither deny Celeſtial *Manna* to his *Iſrael*, though in the Wilderneſs. Even Rocks ſhall yield Honey to his People that hearken to his voice, *and walk in his ways*, Pſal. 81. 13, 16. And *he ſpeaks peace only to his People, and holy* (or merciful) *ones*, Pſal. 85. 8. and none are ever made ſuch except only by Regeneration. The ſingle Eye ſees fartheſt; none but pure Hearts can look into Heaven, and there ſee Viſions of *Peace.* If old *Simeon* wait and hope to ſee the Conſolations of *Iſrael*, he muſt be [δίκαιος καὶ εὐλαβὴς] *juſt and devout*, Luk. 2. 25. which no Man is by Nature, but only by converting Grace. God alone enjoys himſelf in perfect Reſt, nor can any thing partake of this *Moral Reſt*, further than

*Nat. quæſt* l. 3. init.

'tis

'tis happy in a Participation of the *nature of God.* Whatever is in God, is neceſſarily in him, and the Combination of all his Excellencies, is as neceſſary as their Exiſtence; 'tis impoſſible that any one ſhould be without all the reſt, and the reſt without any one. Indeed, they are all but one Eſſence, and that one Nature is all undividedly. They are alſo inſeparable in all their Emanations and Outgoings to his Servants. If any be communicated to Man, all other that are communicable accompany it. Wherever then the Divine Life in *Holineſs* diffuſes it ſelf, 'tis ſeconded with its Individual Companion *Happineſs:* If a Man have no feeling of this, 'tis becauſe he hath none of the other.

See to it then, Oh my Soul, that thou be formed after the Similitude of God, as ever thou hopeſt for Satisfaction, in and from him. Conformity to the Divine Will in its Precepts, is indiſpenſibly required in order to inheriting the Promiſes. God himſelf neither will nor can comfort thee, if Ungodlike, but only by firſt making thee Godlike; till thou communicate in his Sanctity, thou canſt not communicate in his Love; 'tis impoſſible to be happy in his Peace, when thou art miſerable in his Enmity; or rationally to conclude that he loves thee, when thou knoweſt he hates thy Luſts, which yet are unſeparated from thee, and therefore haſt all the reaſon in the World, to believe that for their ſake he hates thy Perſon; 'tis not poſſible to know, that he reſpects thee, when thou knoweſt that thou hateſt Him. To thy Work then, or take thy doom; converted thou muſt be, or comforted thou canſt not be. Oh! as thou loveſt thy Life, thy Peace, and an everlaſting ſtate of Glory and Felicity in Heaven, retire into thy ſelf,

ſelf, Survey all thy inward Receſſes, dive into the bottom of that Sea of filthineſs, in which thou art naturally drenched, and at the point of Drowning, and which caſts up all that abominable Mire, and Filth, and Poiſon, that renders thee infinitely hateful to God, and rages as a ſecret Plague, and Peſtilence in thy Heart and Bowels, to gripe and gnaw thee to Death everlaſting. Oh behold, how naſty, odious, deteſtable, execrable it has made thee, the very ſcum and offſcouring of the Creation, fit for nothing but the Dunghil and Dungeon of everlaſting darkneſs, to be conſumed in the ever-burning, unquenchable *Tophet* of Divine Indignation. Oh look into that foul loathſome Sty of ordure and rottenneſs, thy wicked Heart, what Toads, what Vipers are thence crawling out continually by Legions? Sins of Complexion, Age, Calling, Cuſtomary, Beloved, Maſter Sins, thy own, thy other Mens, appropriated by thy Conſent, Counſel, Connivence, if not Compulſion. Oh how numerous! Oh how hainous! How ſoon did'ſt thou begin like a bloody Butcher, thus mortally to Wound thy ſelf? How long haſt thou continued with a never ceaſing frenzy and fury, to gore and torture thy ſelf, in every Limb, every Faculty, every Place, Time, Company, as if thou couldeſt never be barbarouſly enough truculent in thine own Execution, except thou couldeſt create a raging Hell in every diſtinct atom of Body and Soul; and by infinite Tormentors, Devils, rack and rend, and tear thy ſelf, with the moſt intenſive Cruciations. O what a World of Light, of Love, of Means, of Calls, of Motions, of Motives, of Bleſſings, of Prayers, of Vows, Promiſes, Covenant Engagements, Reſolutions, Profeſſions, Convictions, Corrections

ons, *&c.* haſt thou with a ſhameleſs ſancineſs, dared to tread in the Dirt, and haſt broke through all the Rampires that Conſcience, Education, Awe, Providence, Law Divine, Humane, and their ſevereſt Sanctions have ſet up againſt thee; that in a deſperate madneſs of fool-hardy impudence, thou mighteſt ſpew thy ſtinking Vomits in the very face of boundleſs Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs. Oh the beaſtlyneſs of thy Fleſhly Luſts! Oh the heatheniſhneſs of thy Worldly Luſts! Oh the deviliſhneſs of thy Spiritual Wickedneſs! Could'ſt thou but command a view of them in their malignant, venomous, helliſh Nature, all thoſe Infernal Fiends that inhabit the black Receſſes of everlaſting Darkneſs, all the diſmal Plagues and Horrors of that doleful Region of Fire and Brimſtone, could not make or preſent a Spectacle of greater Formidableneſs and Deformity: Yet all this is intimately within thee, cleaving as cloſe to thee as thy very Nature, as inſeparable, as thy deſire of it, and delight in it can poſſibly make it; a ſight that would make thee quiver, be ſick, and ſwoon, and die, ſhould the Lord fully open thine Eyes. Oh wretched Soul! who ſhall deliver thee, who ſhall relieve thee? Thou art as black as Hell, as foul a ſink of Contagious Filth and Putrefaction, as infects the World, the chief of Sinners, not knowing ſo much of aggravation in the ſin of Devils themſelves, as thou do'ſt of thine own, yet do'ſt not know the one half. Oh accurſed of God by Nature and Practice! What wilt thou do? What! wilt thou plead with thy Maker? Where do'ſt thou think to appear? *What Mountains and Rocks wilt thou call to cover thee, from the face of him that ſits upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb?* How wilt thou ſtand at that dreadful Tribunal?

bunal? How dareſt thou look at God, or into thy ſelf, where thou wilt find Creatures of thine own, (Sins I mean) of a more prodigious, frightful hue than *Beelzebub* himſelf. Oh look upon them and tremble, look till thy Heart ake, and break, and ſink, and ſweat in an agony of Blood and Woe; look and be in Pangs, like thoſe of a Woman in Travail; look till the Sluces break open, till thou canſt pour out thy ſtrength in a flood of godly Sorrow.

Ah wretch! What haſt thou done? Whom haſt thou Wronged, Diſhonoured, Crucified, Murthered? Firſt, by thy ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, next afreſh, by thy Impenitence, Unbelief, and neglect of the healing Balſam, which he tenders in his own Blood? Ah Beaſt, Bedlam, Blood-ſucker, Murtherer! Haſt thou bathed thine Hands in thine own, and the Heart-blood of God? And does it not cut thee to the Heart? Art thou ſtill offering the moſt vile, horrid, cruel Affronts, Indignities, Injuries, to the Eternal Father of Heaven, the Bleſſed Jeſus, his only begotten, dearly beloved Son, to the *Holy Spirit* of Promiſe; and yet rock and adamant, untouched, undiſſolved, unaffected? Oh Savage Monſter! Oh barbarous Homicide, Deicide! again to rake in the Heart, and tear the Fleſh, and bore the Hands and Feet, and ſpit in the Face of infinite Love, that bleeds over thee in thy Blood, and melts into the tendereſt Commiſerations, when thou art drowning thy ſelf in the deepeſt pit of Perdition. Did he ſuffer ſuch dolorous Torturings in his Body, but an infinitely more intolerable Hell in his Soul, for thy ſake, to quicken thee, even when thou art killing him anew by thy Sin? And does he with ſuch yerning Bowels of compaſſion ſtrive with thee, if it be poſſible to exalt and love thee into

into Heaven, when thou debaſeſt and hateſt, and would ſin him if it were poſſible into Hell? And yet does not thy Heart relent, and ſmite, and gall thee? Oh is this thy kindneſs to thy Friend, to thy Redeemer, to thy ſelf? Oh! What do'ſt thou deſerve for theſe foul Villanies committed againſt a Perſon, of thee the beſt deſerving in the World? How many Hells? How many tormenting Devils are thy juſt reward, for ſo horrible Affronts, Deſpites, Scorns put upon the Majeſty and Mercy of Heaven? Oh! What canſt thou do, or think, or hope in this lamentable caſe? *Wherewithal wilt thou come before the Lord?* What haſt thou to tender as a juſt Reparation? Or canſt thou bear up againſt the fiery tempeſt of his devouring Indignation? Oh woe unto thee that ever thou waſt brought out of the Womb of *Nothing*, to behold thy ſelf in Circumſtances ſo deplorable, and ſo little affected, afflicted. This, this is the moſt miſerable ſcene of all thy Miſeries: To be ready to be ſpew'd out of the Mouth of Jeſus, into the very jaws of the roaring Lion; to be tumbled down out of the boſom of God, into the everlaſting Burnings of the bottomleſs Pit, and yet be ſenſeleſs, ſecure, fearleſs, careleſs, remorſeleſs. Oh aſtoniſhment! Oh horror!

Awake, awake, Oh my ſenſe, Oh my ſtupid, benummed, brawny Heart; and melt in the fiery Oven of Wrath, or the warm refreſhing Sunſhine of Love! Oh Grief and Anguiſh! Where do ye inhabit? Whither are ye retired? Oh come and dwell in a ſinful Soul, and pour it out in a penitential Deluge. Oh Almighty Love, ſhed abroad thy heart-diſſolving Influences, and make the Floods overflow! Oh, in what bitterneſs of woe am I, that I have undervalued and trod thee under

under my profane Feet, that I have kick'd at thoſe Bowels, and even torn out that Heart, that hath yearned over me in the moſt affectionate degree of Pity and Clemency. *My Bowels, my Bowels, I am pained at my very heart*, for the ſordid diſingenuouſneſs as well as the bloody barbarouſneſs of my Deportment toward thee. Oh beloved and bleſſed Son of God, *whom with accurſed, cruel, wicked hands I have crucified, and ſlain:* Whoever were the Inſtruments yet, 'twas I, as a principal meritorious Cauſe, by my Sin, that was the *Judas, the betrayer*, the *Jew, the Murtherer:* I drive the Nails, I puſh'd forward the Spear, I tore open thy very Heart to let out that bleſſed Spring of Water and Blood. 'Twas my guilt that firſt made my own, then thy unpolluted Body paſſible and mortal. 'Twas I that armed the more formidable vengeance of thy Father againſt thy innocent Soul: I that ſet open the flood-gates of Divine Wrath, and let in that terrible Inundation of Miſeries upon it, which overwhelmed it, deſtroyed, kill'd it, (as far as was poſſible for that which was Immortal) and thy Body in its Ruins. Oh 'twas ſinful, I that poured out all thoſe ſcalding Hells, into that bleſſed Soul of the Holy One of God, which melted his Body into a ſhowre of Blood, that I became as far as poſſible the Author of the Death of God. Bleed, Oh my Soul, bleed a deluge over thoſe bleeding Wounds, that dying Heart, that cruciated Soul of the Crucified Son of God. Oh grieve and mourn bitterly for thy vexing, rebelling againſt, and grieving the Spirit of Grace, whom thou haſt ſo often thruſt away by quenching his Motions, ſtrangling his Convictions, reſiſting his Operations, as if 'twas thy deſign to fruſtrate all the

me-

methods of infinite Love for thy Salvation. Oh hateful to God and Man! Wilt thou not be ſtung to the Heart with all, wherewith thou haſt deſpited all the kindneſs, and goodneſs, and tenderneſs of Heaven? Oh my vileneſs! Oh my baſeneſs! 'tis unutterable, 'tis unſufferable; where can a Parallel be found throughout the whole Creation? Oh what am I? What have I made my ſelf? An abhorrence to all Fleſh, to all Spirits; and ſhall I not be ſo to my ſelf? Is there a poiſonful Serpent on Earth, a ſqualid Fury in Hell, more virulent and abominable? The Heart of God, Chriſt, the Spirit, Angels, Bleſſed Saints, riſe againſt me; as the viperous-Brood, the filthy Vomit of Satan, ſpit out of his Mouth, as like him in form (or deformity rather, and uglineſs) as Hell to Hell. And what now is thy Portion, Oh miſerable Soul! What thy doom? See it, dread it, yet expect it; for how canſt thou avoid it? Ah! the bottom of the bottomleſs abyſs of Woe, the hotteſt Manſion in the raging Furnace of Divine Wrath; how canſt thou abide it? I am tottering upon the very brinks of Hell: Down I fall, I ſink, I periſh; What can ſave me? Who can redeem my Soul from Deſtruction everlaſting? I my ſelf cannot; no, nor all the created Powers of Heaven and Earth: And have I not abundant reaſon to fear, that the bleſſed *Trinunity* will not? Oh woful Soul! Whither haſt thou ſuffer'd thy Wickedneſs to hurry thee? What *wilt thou do in the day of God's fierce Anger*, which in a moment may arreſt thee, and ſwallow thee up? And what Remedy? Where wilt thou ſeek, where canſt thou find ſecurity againſt that Omnipotent Vengeance, that is ready to Arraign thee? *Oh! What wilt thou do to be ſaved?* Is there any

any poſſibility? Is *there no Balm in* Gilead? *Is there no Phyſician there?* Oh there, there alone is thy Succour; wilt thou reject it? In this Perplexity, wilt thou deſpiſe it? Wilt thou defer and delay applying thy ſelf to a ſerious Care, to make uſe of it? Oh! Be willing, be forward, be eager to do; nay, to ſuffer any thing, but the loſs of Holineſs and God, that thou maiſt be healed.

I come, Lord, now I come, a poor Prodigal returning to my wits, my ſelf, that I may return to thee, and with a groaning, oppreſſed, pained Heart, weary of Sin the Cauſe, ſick of ſelf, dead to all mine own Righteouſneſs, and every thing: I thus under the Influence and Conduct of thy Holy Spirit, preſent my ſelf at the loweſt ſtep of thy Throne, as unfit, unworthy, to lift up mine Eyes to look thee in the face; and being in a grievous Agony of Woe, becauſe I have offended thee ſo hainouſly, ſo frequently, ſo perſeveringly, by a Deportment ſo diſhoneſt, vile, ſordid; I loath my ſelf, and all my fore-paſt evil ways of Spiritual and Carnal Wickedneſs, Omiſſions, Commiſſions, Sins of Nature, Heart, and Life, in Word, or Deed, or Thought; they wound me to the very Soul; I faint under them; I cannot with patience reflect upon my unuttereble Folly, in living unto, and under them; I abhor my ſelf, in duſt and aſhes; I utterly and eternally abandon them, reſolve againſt, promiſe, vow, covenant, to be an utter and implacable Enemy to them. Down all ye Idols of my Heart, Luſts of the Eyes, Luſts of the Fleſh, Pride of Life, Filthineſs of Spirit, as well as Fleſh. In good earneſt, I now purpoſe, through thy Aid and Grace, never to return to any of theſe Follies more, never, never more; and under the Aſſiſtance

ſtance of thy Power, I engage my ſelf to the uſe of all poſſible means of thy appointment, to ſuppreſs all Motions to Sin, to ſtrengthen and renew my Reſolutions dayly, to eſtabliſh me againſt Temptations, and carry me on in an aſſiduous Exercise of Repentance, till I have no more Sin to repent of, and yet will not account this any Amends for the Wrong I have done thee, but in an abſolute Renunciation of all that I am, can be, or do, my repenting it ſelf, my holy Duties, my ſtriving againſt Sin, the World, the Devil, and my Religious Performances, as altogether inſufficient and unavailable, to give Compenſation, or ſecure me from Juſtice; I come deſpairing of my ſelf, and all the ſtock I can be furniſh'd with at home, hopeleſs and helpleſs by the whole world, and in an humble and hearty Proſtration of Soul, throw down my ſelf at thy feet, ſeeking Relief, where alone it is to be found, and that is in thy ſelf, *Oh Lord*, thy Son and Spirit; and therefore with my whole mind, will, deſire, delight, and ſtrength, I freely, heartily, fully give up my ſelf, all my Powers and Poſſibilities, unto thee alone, avouching Thee only to be my God, and All-ſufficient Goodneſs, and Happineſs; and therefore, with a lowly Reverence and Submiſſion, I caſt my ſelf as thy ſworn Vaſſal, at thy gracious Foot-ſtool, in a ſincere and abſolute Choice and Acceptance of Thee, *O bleſſed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, for my ſole Portion and Reſt, dedicating my ſelf from my very inmoſt Soul to Thee, *O Heavenly Father*, as my Soveraign *Creator*, Owner, and Governour, to be wholly, and unreſervedly Thine, entirely at thy Diſpoſal, from the very bottom of my Heart, devoting the Remainder of my Spirits, Strength, and Life univerſally to thy

Fear, Love, Honour, Worship, and Service in the Works of Repentance, and Mortification of my Sin, watchfulness against and resistance of Temptation, and over my Heart and Way, and diligence in exercising my self unto *Godliness*, *Righteousness*, and *Sobriety*. And to this purpose as one utterly lost and undone in my self, with a renewed humble Veneration, I offer up my self wholly to thee *O blessed Redeemer* of the World, the only begotten *Son* of the *Eternal Father*, and with a bleeding broken Heart, that hath no other relief but only in and through thee, being in my self a very Hell of Wickedness and Woe, condemned by thy Law, condemned by mine own Conscience, I lift up mine Eyes, look unto, and long for thee, O dear *Lord Jesus*, as my only *Saviour*, *Joy*, and *Crown*; thee I earnestly press after, I value above my Life, my Hopes, my Soul, heartily approving of pleasing my self in, and closing with that Method of *Salvation*, ordained through thee, as the only Mean and Help into the *Favour and Love of God*. Therefore, with the All of my Understanding, and Will, and Might, *I chuse, and embrace, and honour, and love, and delight, and rejoyce in, and venture my self*, my hopes, my happiness, my All upon thee, for ever, and ever, trusting solely to thy Merit and Mediation, accepting Thee in all thy *Offices and Relations*, as *Prophet*, *Priest*, *King*, *Wisdom*, *Righteousness*, *Sanctification*, *Redemption*; as my *Soveraign Lord and Master*, the only *Espoused Bridegroom* of my Soul, resolving through thy Grace, to betake my self only to Thee, to be Thine alone, abrenunciating and disclaiming all that stands in competition with Thee, and receiving cordially all thy Holy Counsels and Laws, as the only Guide and Rule of my Thoughts, Affections,

ctions, Words, and Actions; with a thorow purpoſe and endeavour to take the higheſt Care, under the Aids of thy Grace, both to conform in every thing thereto, and boggle at no difficulties, dangers, or ſufferings, which I may expect, or meet with, in theſe thy ways, but perſevere therein to the end; neither ſhall any Corruption within, or Temptation from without, have my heart, or liking, or allowance, ſo as to withdraw my Soul from theſe Holy Reſolves. For which end, I caſt my ſelf whole and entire upon thy Free Grace, and Almighty Power, *and Holy Spirit, to work in me, both to will, and to do all, according to thy good pleaſure*, being firmly engaged to be Thine, and to take Thee to be Mine, without a Moments farther Procraſtination. *Come Holy Ghoſt, Eternal God*, and breathe into my Soul, infuſe thy Gifts and Graces, communicating thy Power, to a poor impotent ſuccourleſs Sinner, that here, lo! conſecrates himſelf to Thee, and with a ſelf-reſigning Spirit, reſolves to venture all upon thy Conduct and Influence, to be at thy Beck and Command in all things, not knowing, nor being able, nor therefore willing to do any thing without thee. Inſpire my Mind, direct my Heart, awe my Conſcience, regulate my Life, ſtrengthen and uphold my goings, that notwithſtanding mine own inſufficiency, I may by Thee be enlarged in heart, to run in the ways of thy Commandments. And now, *Merciful God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, (through that All-ſufficient Merit, that has procured all Bleſſings) accept of me, and own me, as none of mine own, but thy Portion and Inheritance, who have taken Thee to be mine.

This, this, O my Soul, is the *One thing needful*

*to be done in good earnest, speedily, with an uncontroulable Bent and Steadiness of Will, and never to be repented of.* I am pained in my very Soul for, and heartily bewail my Neglects, Deferrings, and Aversations. And here I am, blessed Lord, setting to my Seal, and firmly binding my self in this my Baptismal *Covenant*, with an irreversible purpose to act all the remainder of my Life, thro' thy Mercy and Assistance, only according to the Tenour of it.

Be serious then here, O my Soul, or thou abjurest all solid Consolation. Thou canst never enjoy good Hopes without a good Conscience: If thou desirest to build high in thy Comforts, be sure thou lay a good Foundation. If thou never entrest into such Meditations and Resolutions as these, bid everlastingly adieu to all true Contentation. If thou do not really turn to God, thou turnest away thy Peace. The *Holy Ghost* will never be a Comforter, where He is not a Converter. *Except thou be born again of Water, and the Spirit, thou canst not enter into the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Peace.* See to it therefore, that thou be raised from thy Death in Trespasses and Sins, as ever thou desirest a Resurrection of thy Joys. No Purity, no Peace.

5. Having thus begun, go on: *Make Repentance Mortification, Watchfulness, Faith, Love, Resignation to the Will of God,* thy daily uninterrupted Exercise; and endeavour to grow in all, and be upright in all, else all's nothing. Make Sincerity thy great Aim and Endeavour. *Hypocrisie* is Heritor no where but in the Land of Darkness, and dismal Woe. Thy Joys will resemble their Parents. If they be a Cheat, so will they also. Be really good, and eminently so too. *Aut Cæsar, aut nullus.* Lean Graces do but devour fat Comforts

forts, never enjoy them. The ſweeteſt Promiſes yield no laſting Refreſhment, to fickle hearts uneſtabliſhed with Grace. If thy Spiritual Strength be ſmall, when thy ſtanding in Chriſtianity is great, ſome ſecret Diſeaſe keeps thee down. Thy Stomach is foul, makes no good Digeſtion, ſome under-ground Corruption draws in that Nutriment, thoſe Spirits that ſhould invigorate and encreaſe thy Graces, like a Worm in the Paunch or Bowels, feeding upon that, which ſhould feed thee, and ſo defrauding thee.

Kill then thou muſt, or be kill'd: Repentance and Faith, and Mortification, and Watchfulneſs, alone muſt ſublevate thee. Engage thy ſelf herein, and make theſe a daily Task. Let not thy Sloath, the World, or any ſweet Luſt, raviſh thy Heart into an hours Neglect, no not a Moments. Reſolve and act with the firſt, and to the uttermoſt. Thou art upon the Pits Brink, ready to drop down into everlaſting Horrours, and till thou repenteſt, haſt no Foot-hold; nay, thy Foot is already ſlipt, thou art tumbling down head-long, and no Mercy can or will hold thee up, but only as far as it engages thee in Repentance. This is the ſole Relief that thou canſt have from Heaven; nothing elſe can bring thee back, raiſe thee out of the Ditch, return thee into a ſtate of Safety, but only thy returning this way to God. 'Tis abſolutely impoſſible, under the preſent Oeconomy of Divine Grace, for Mercy it ſelf to ſave thee, to ſatisfie thee with Peace, without Repentance: And no leſs impoſſible for thee to ſatisfie thy ſelf, in the ſoundneſs of thy firſt Repentance, without Cordial Reſolutions, Cares, Endeavours, in a ſecond daily life-long Repentance and Mortification.

Go over again then with this Work, never

preſent thy ſelf to the Lord without this Sacrifice, of a broken contrite Heart: As thou reneweſt thy falls, renew thy riſing by Repentance. That day upon which thou ſinneſt not, repent not; but be ſure thou omit this Duty upon none other. If there be any failures in thy firſt Work, a recognition and renewal of it may redintegrate and rectifie thee. No Man is hearty in that Work, which he is loath to reiterate. Suſpect that Repentance which ſtands all alone in a ſingle act, and hath no Seconds. Be dayly therefore ſearching thy Heart, and examining thy Life, caſt up thy Accounts at even, reckon with God, and thine own conſcience, for the day and all thy Life paſt, that thou may'ſt not lie down a Debtor to Juſtice, leaſt it be requir'd of thee ere the Morning. This is ſafe, and uſe will make it ſweet. Should a Traytor to God and thine own Soul lodge with thee in peace but for a Night, with what face could'ſt thou preſent thy ſelf before thy Judge, ſhould he arraign thee, and tell thee *this Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee.* 'Tis dangerous to dally with Sin, deſperate to irritate God. The Curſe of any one Sin unrepented of, and the Wrath and Fiery Indignation of God, are no eaſie Pillows to lay thy head upon. Thy ſleep will then be ſweeteſt when thy Sin is ſoureſt; and thy Reſt will be moſt refreſhing and comfortable, upon the ſoft Downy Bed of a good and pure conſcience, purged by Repentance, purifyed by Faith.

But 'tis not enough to forſake thy Sin and turn to goodneſs, with a broken, bleeding Heart; but the root of Sin muſt be bound about with a Hoop of Iron, that it may be deaden'd and ſpring out no more. *Crucifie* then the *Fleſh and the World*, and be Crucified to them, and deny ſo as to *mortifie*

*tifie Ungodlineſs*, as well as *Worldly Luſts*, elſe thou art not *taught by the Grace of God that brings Salvation*, Tit. 2. 11. Repentance cuts off the Branches (the acts of Sin) that are already ſprouted out; but thy cares muſt not only reſpect what is paſt or preſent, but what may be in future. Therefore muſt thou engage thy preventive cares and endeavours in *Mortification*. Draw out the Heart-Blood of thy Luſts by cutting them off intirely from thy Heart and Affections. That accounted ſo truculent a Word of *Cæſar* to his Soldiers at *Pharſalia*, *ſtrike at the face*, which gave him the Victory, is no cruelty, but good policy here, and mercy to thy ſelf, and will be Crown'd with like Succeſs. That which is moſt lovely in thy Corruptions, moſt pleaſing to thy ſenſe; muſt be firſt laid at, ſtrike at their Beauty, turn that into deformity, and thou winneſt the Day. They live only in thy love, as far as approving themſelves to thy carnal Affections, whence they are call'd *Luſts*. Set up a Cherub with a flaming Sword turning every way, to keep them out of that their *Paradiſe*, and to guard thy Heart that Tree of Life, and thou effectually condemneſt them to an irremediable Mortality; thou really executeſt and deſtroyeſt them.

Eſpecially if hereto thou ſuperadd the Exerciſes of Faith, and its ſocial Graces. For to crucifie Sin without Faith, deriving vertue and ſtrength from the Croſs, *i. e.* the merit of Chriſt, or that Holy Spirit and his Aid, which Chriſt by his merit purchaſed, is not at all to be hoped. It would never have had its Chriſtian Name from the Croſs, if this had no Influence upon *Mortification*. The *Moral* is pretty, but ſhort of that Perfection of the *Spiritual*, to which we are directed

and enabled as *Christians*. 'Tis (not if ye by *Reason* and *Philosophy*, but) *if ye through the Spirit, do mortifie the deeds of the Body*, ye shall live, *Rom.* 8. 13. What Spirit he speaks of, the next verse declares: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.* This certainly imports something more than mere Nature, and natural Improvements. I love the *Platonical and Stoical* νέκρωσις, and am pleased to read those Precepts whereby they direct it. But the *Philosophical Death in voluntarily loosing the Soul from the Body, and bodily Life, and Passions to which it was ty'd, by converting it self to the service of bodily Affections, will only introduce a Philosophical Peace*, i. e. *not to grieve, or be angry, to be necessitated to nothing, to be unconcern'd about Extrinsecals, untouched, and free*: as they describe it, Christian Mortification is a higher thing. 'Tis the Work of Grace, subduing the Sins that are contrary to it; especially the Corruption of Nature. The Work of Grace influenced by the Holy Ghost. The Spirits work by Grace, in relation to Christ and his Crucifixion; wherein the grace of Faith in special hath a peculiar Province. I mean not Christianity in general, which sometimes is entitled Faith; but that particular Grace which the Old Testament oft calls Trust, the *New*, *committing our Souls to God.* When in a sense of Sin, Impotency, and Emptiness, we give up our selves to God in Christ, entrusting our Souls with him, and expecting all from him alone, in the way of his Covenant and Promises; which hope is an inseparable fruit of Faith, and therefore included with it in the same title of Trust, which is indeed both. Thus then

*Porphyr.* ἀποστ. 1. 9.

*Arrian*, l. 3. c. 13.

do

do Chriſtians mortifie Sin: Being ſenſible that they are inſufficient by the power of their own reaſon and moral Vertue, to get the Victory over Original Corruption, and evil Habits, they apply themſelves to God in the Name of Chriſt; not only owning all Chriſtian Doctrine, and obeying all Chriſtian Precepts, which are remote conditions and helps of Mortification; but in ſpecial conſidering that Chriſt by his merit procured power againſt Sin, as well as Pardon, which both are given upon no other account, but only for the ſake of Chriſt; therefore they beg of God, that according to his promiſe, he would *ſubdue Iniquities*, Mic. 7. 19. He would graciouſly pleaſe to beſtow upon them, for Chriſt's ſake, that ſtrength, *by his Spirit in their inner Man*, which may enable them to conquer, and keep under their Concupiſcence, *the Fleſh, with the Affections, and Luſts thereof*, and upon the help of his Spirit, ſo beg'd, they rely, and depend, and truſt to it, in every aſſault and motion of Sin, lifting up their Hearts to God in Chriſt, for renewed Power to reſiſt and ſuppreſs it, and keep themſelves pure; diſtruſting themſelves, that they may put their whole truſt in the living God, upon whom thus fixing their affiance, they wait in patience and watchfulneſs, and the uſe of his Ordinances; for *Chriſt to be made their Sanctification and Redemption*, from the Dominion, and Tyranny, or *Rebellion* of Sin, which by degrees is granted them; and this Exerciſe of Faith in Prayer, and Prayer means, is the immediate and next condition of the grant of power againſt Sin; which is followed with the uſe both of Rational and Scriptural Conſiderations, care to prevent all occaſions, or irritations of Concupiſcence, and other evil Diſpoſitions; an early

early endeavour to ſuppreſs the firſt Motions and Luſtings, &c. but the power of theſe is not truſted to, as ſufficient, but Gods alone, in the uſe of theſe helps, to overcome and crucifie the evil of their Natures, and all that are rooted in it, and flow from it: Act then ſolely under God, look after ſuch an effectual Faith, that carrying thee above all Viſibles to the inviſible God; will under his Influence purifie thy Heart, work by Love, and reduce thy Will into Subjection to God, and grow herein daily.

'Twas much that *Philoſophers* ſhould make it one of their προλήψεις, or *Governing Prenotions.* [*Will nothing but what God Wills*;] and that decantate [ἕπεσθαι τῷ Θεῷ] *Follow God.* *Seneca* ſubjoyns, *In regno nati ſumus, Deo parere libertas eſt.* In a Kingdom are we born, to obey God is liberty: Yea, 'tis *Royal Liberty.* Arrianus, *I have one to be ſubject to, to obey, even God,* &c. Oh! let not Infidels riſe up in Judgment to condemn thee, for a Rebel againſt the Will of God, in his Precepts or Providences. 'Tis an ugly thing for a Chriſtian to have a Will, a Separate Will. The Will of Man is a Bedlam, except in Conjunction with, and Subordination to God. The liberty of the Will of Man conſiſts in Servitude to God. Excellently *Arrianus: I am Gods freeman, and friend, that I may voluntarily obey him, I muſt ſet nothing in competition, not my Body, not my Poſſeſſions, not Principality, not Fame, no nothing at all,* &c.

Arrian l. 3. c. 26. p. 362. *and* l. 2. c. 16. p. 217. *Marc. Anton.* l. 10. §. 11. Seneca de vita beat. c. 15. Arrian l. 4. c. 12. p. 426. Ἐγὼ ἔχω τίνι ὑποτετάχθαι τίνι πειθάρχῳ τῷ Θεῷ, &c.

Ἐλεύθερός εἰμι, καὶ φίλος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵν' ἑκὼν πείθωμαι αὐτῷ, &c. *Arr.* l. 4. c. 3. p. 380.

In

In Summ, labour to form all thy Faculties, after the beſt Paterns, and imitate ſuch in thine Actions. *Chriſtianity is an Imitation of the Nature, Life, and Actions of Chriſt.* * *Marc. Anton.* could ſay, *God wills, that all Rational Beings ſhould be like him, not flatter him. Clemens* of *Alexandria* makes account, that *Plato* thought ſimilitude to God the end of *Philoſophy:* This the *Philoſopher* may propoſe, but the true *Chriſtian* only attains. The Exhortations to it in the Scriptures are many. *Eph.* 5. 1, 2. 1 *Cor.* 11 1. conſequentially, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Rom.* 8. 29. *Luk.* 6 36. 1 *Joh.* 3. 3, 17. 1 *Pet.* 1. 16. *Matth.* 5. 48. A Chriſtian unlike Chriſt is a contradiction, as a godly Man not God-like. *When Chriſt dwells in the Heart by Faith,* he will transform it, and the Life into the likeneſs of his own. Gal. 2. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt,* ſays *Paul, nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the Fleſh, is by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* This is that *living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit,* he after mentions, Chap. 5. 25. *Putting on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* Rom. 13. 14. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

* Χριστιανισμὸς ἡ τῆς θείας φύσεως μίμησις *Greg. Nyſ.* M. Antonin. l. 10. 8. Cl Alex. *Strom.* l 5.

Wilt thou not then, Oh my Soul, aſpire after this? 'Tis high, above thee, a ſtrange Myſtery to thy carnal part, and ſo at firſt is every thing of God; yet nothing is to be deſpaired of that is enjoyn'd by God, whoſe Precepts are his Power, whoſe Word his Work. And if *God who commanded the Light to ſhine out of darkneſs, and it obeyed, do alſo command the Light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Chriſt, to ſhine into thine Heart:* 2 Cor. 4. 6. That will much more obey the voice

voice of his Almighty Grace; and this *Light is Life*, this *Life Love*, this *Love* universal Conformity to God. For, *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*, 1 Joh. 4. 16. and *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*, Rom. 13. 8. 10. Gal. 5. 14. Oh thou Blessed Spirit, God of Love, descend into and shed abroad thy Nature in my Heart; kindle, Oh thou ever adorable Breath of God, and blow up this Holy Ardour and Flame, that as a *Seraphim*, I may ascend in a transport of Delight and Joy to thy Throne, and perpetually burn upon thine Altar; and being like thee in Love, I shall through Love be like thee in all things. Am I a Professor, am I a Believer; am I a knowing, a weeping, a discoursing, a practising, a just, a dispassionate, a temperate, a bountiful and liberal, a condescending, a friendly Person: Yet if I have not, if I am not Love, I have, I am nothing. The reason of 1 *Cor.* 13. 1, 2, 3. will carry this and more. Neither extraordinary gifts of *Tongues*, prophesie, abstruse *Speculation*, *Miracles*; nor extraordinary Practices, as beggering my self to give to the Poor, receiving the Crown of Martyrdom under the most cruel Tortures, voluntarily submitted to, are at all available without Love; therefore much less things of a common and ordinary Nature. Love is all in all. Thy Repentance, thy Faith, thy Hope, thy Prayers, thy Vows, thy Obedience, are good and acceptable, if Spirited with Love, without it they (and all beside, that thou canst possibly be, and do) are but all as a Sacrifice of Swines Blood, and blessing an Idol: there's nothing of Life in them, nothing of Soul, because nothing of God, because nothing of Love. *Oh love the Lord then*, Oh my Soul, with all thy mind, with

with all thy Heart, with all thy ſtrength, and thy Neighbour as thy ſelf, for his ſake; let him have thy whole deſire, thy whole delight at all times. *Minus te amat, qui aliquid tecum amat, quod non propter te amat.* *He loves thee but little (Oh Lord) who loves any thing with thee which he loves not for thee,* ſays a devout Man. 'Tis but meet that the higheſt God ſhould have the Supremacy in my heart. If in the greater World he be King, muſt he be a Subject in the leſs. I am worſe than Hell, if God muſt not be acknowledged Soveraign in my Soul. The Spirits there dare not, cannot but own him as their Lord; this is the duty they pay, extorted indeed by their ſenſe and fear, which that it may not be thy diſmal lot and fate. Oh my Soul, advance thou him freely to the Crown within thy ſelf, in a ſpontaneous, generous Ardour of pure Incorrupt, Incorruptible Love: Which if thou doſt not thou art accurſed; if thou doſt, thou art bleſſed; for 'tis a Prayer upon record in God's Word; and therefore part of the matter of Chriſt's Interceſſion, *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* [ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ] *in Incorruption or Immortality, i. e.* with a never-fading Love, *Eph.* 2. 24. and that only is a ſincere Love. Oh Love the Lord on Earth as thou wilt love him in Heaven, with the ſame kind, and preſs toward the ſame degree of Love, and be happy. Thus live in God, above the tumult and hurry of external things, and be at reſt.

*Idiotæ contempl. de amore Dei* c. 12.

1 *Cor.* 16. 22.

Live every day as if it were thy laſt; and in every imployment ſo act, as one that can be

Marc. Antonin. l. 2. p. 5. &c. *Omnem crede diem tibi diluxiſſe Supremum.* Arrian, l. 4. c. 10.

free

p. 416. τί θέλεις ποιῶν εὑρεθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ θανάτου, &c. *It.* l. 3. c. 5. p. 273. Antonin. l. 6. §. 30.

free to be found therein by Death. *What would'st thou be found doing by Death,* says *Arrianus? I for my part, doing some masculine, beneficial, publick, useful, generous Work. But, if I cannot be found in these, yet this is* [ἀκώλυτον] *unhinderable; this is given to me, to amend my self, to elaborate that faculty which makes use of Phantasies, to endeavour* [*apathy or*] *freeness from Passion, to give my Affections their due; and (if I can be so happy) to gain soundness, certainty of Judgment. If Death find me thus employ'd, 'twill be sufficient to engage me, with hands stretched out to God, to say: I have not neglected those Powers thou gavest me to observe thy Government, and follow it: I have done my endeavour not to disgrace thee: Behold how I have used my Senses, my Prenotions. Have I ever blamed thee? Have I been displeased with any thing befalling, or wish'd it otherwise? Have I misguided my Affections, because thou begattest me? I render thee the praise of thy Gifts; in as much as I have well used thine, it sufficeth me. Resume them now again, and where thou pleasest dispose of me. For, all were thine and thou gavest them me.* I the rather produce these Testimonies out of Heathen Authors, to let Christians see how inexcusable it will be in them, who have infinitely better Light, Means, Aids; to neglect what even Nature and Reason taught *Philosophers* to practise: And withall to awaken others with my self, to a more assiduous care in these Exercises, least it be found more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, than for us at the great day.

Observe all the inward Workings of the Divine Spirit, both in calling out the actings of Grace, and reviving thee with Peace, and keep them

them upon record for after advantage. Time may come when all thy preſent Senſations may be ſo cloudy, that thou canſt not ſee a peep of day; canſt not from any thing that thou feeleſt, conclude that thy ſtate is right before God. But if at ſuch a ſeaſon and hour of temptation, thou be'ſt able to call to mind, that upon due trial, when in a ſober and compoſed calm of Thoughts, the Lord ſatisfied thee upon ſure and indefeiſible Evidence, that thy Heart was truly changed, and that thou waſt (as a *New Creature*) *in Chriſt Jeſus*; and that thy Objections, and misdoubtings, and temptations to the contrary were thorowly anſwered. This will be ſuch an eaſe to thy mind, and a revival of thy hopes, that ere long the miſts and darkneſs will be driven away, and thou wilt again reaſcend into a clear and ſerene Heaven of Light, and Peace, and Joy. Make ſure in this manner to lay up, and reſerve a good ſtock and treaſure of Experiences, if thou deſireſt Riches of Comfort, yet content not thy ſelf with the old, but make new. To remember what thou did'ſt enjoy, and feel *in the days of the right Hand of the Moſt High*, may revive thee but to ſenſe, and feel it at preſent much more. Renew then thoſe gracious Exerciſes over and over, that did once produce Halcyon days in thy Soul, and they will recall them; the ſame effects will iſſue from the ſame Cauſes. Amend what was amiſs in former actings, which gave Satan advantage to redintegrate thy Troubles, and this will eſtabliſh thy Peace upon a ſecurer, and more unexceptionable baſis. 'Tis not poſſible to refute the Devils Objections againſt thy ſincerity, by a method more effectual, than a more ſerious care to act all over again ſincerely, which he tempts thee to ſuppoſe was done unſound-

soundly. Renovated Acts of a sound Repentance and unfeigned Faith, as sure Testimonies of thy Renovation after the Image of God, will dash thine Accuser out of countenance. If thou canst make any fresh Experiments of the Power of Divine Grace, effecting this: If God take thee anew into his bosom of Love, to melt thee: If a view of him whom thy Sins have pierced, cause thy ebbing godly Sorrow again to flow over all the Banks: Lastly, if with a perfect Heart thou returnest from all thy by-past follies, unto him from whom thou hast deeply revolted; this will again retrieve thy sinking Heart and hopes, as a new *taste of the Lord's graciousness*, and evidence that he hath not forsaken thee, but that his Mercy and Godness *follows thee, and shall all the days of thy life even to Eternity.*

Set about this, O my Soul, with a resolved obstinacy of endeavour, that will not be conquerable by any assaults of Corruption or Temptation. For, thou canst never take a Heaven of Joy and Rest, except by violence and force. Weak resolves do but only encrease the Devils Triumphs. Strong cares are requisite to possess thee of strong Consolations. Observe where, when, and how the Spirit moves, and spread thy Sails before his sweet *Spirations*. He is the Comforter, because the Conducter into the way of Peace. Thou canst enjoy no more of his Testimony to solace thee, than thou dost of his Grace to quicken and sanctifie thee: And if thou comfortest thy self without the Spirits Witness concurring, thou art a fond self-flattering fool, and wilt fantastically solace thy self into confusion. Lay a sure Ground Work for his Sealings, in thy *Sanctification*; but then thou must build upon it, endea-

endeavouring to grow in purity of Spirit, by frequency in purifying Practices. Never build Comforts upon any Recognition of former Comforts, except thou wast fully satisfied their Grounds were sure. But, rather begin again and dig deeper, that thou may'st build stronglier. Labour to be Heroically good, if thou desirest to be eminently happy. Make thy way through the Temple of *Vertue*, into the Temple of *Honour and Peace*, that thou deceive not thy self, and embrace a Cloud instead of *Juno*.

Finally, having done all, renounce all as unproportionable. By thy Faith take Sanctuary in the mercy of God, through the Merits of *Jesus Christ*. Make him thy living guide and way, to the true Life of everlasting Joys and Consolations.

*Lastly*, Be fervent and constant in Prayer. Peace is not attainable but only by Addresses to the *God of Peace*. 'Tis his Gift, and must be thy desire expresst in Petition, ere thou receivest it. Use Prayer and engage Prayer, that both thine own and others Interest in Heaven may prevail for thee; which last by the Apostle, *Jam.* 5. 16. called [ἐνεργουμένη δέησις] *inwrought, inworking Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much.* The ἐνεργούμενοι were such as being moved by a supernatural Power or Agent, acted beyond themselves above Nature. And Righteous Souls are acted by the *Holy Ghost* in Prayer, *Rom.* 8. 14, 15, 16. Not by extraordinary Influences as the divinely inspired, but ordinary: Yet these not common to all, but special and proper, which no wicked Man ever Experiences; and this therefore not so much with respect to the Gift which is common, as the Grace of Prayer, which is peculiar to the New-born Children of God. Indeed

the Gift is but the Body, Grace the Soul of Prayer; and the most Essential Grace of Prayer properly so call'd, *viz. Petition is Desire*, the most efficacious is *Faith*. For I doubt not to give the title of *Grace* to sincere *Desire*, notwithstand that it hath been exploded upon a reason something odd, *viz. That desire of Grace, is no more Grace, than desire of Health, Riches*, &c. *is Health, Riches*, &c. A ground doubly fallacious; for 1. It doubly misrepresents the contrary Opinion, which 1. only pronounces concerning sincere Desires. 2. Means not, that the Desire is formally the Grace, and every Grace desired. But if *upright Desire* be not a Grace, though not the Grace desired, neither is *upright Delight*, nor consequently *upright Love*, whereof these are the special and sole Ingredients; Desire being as essential as Delight. And if some sincere desire of some Graces, be not inchoatively the Graces desired, or an Effect or Act issuing from them, (which amounts to the same thing, and will subserve to the same end, for which that Proposition is used, *viz.* to satisfie the weak but sincere Christians, that question their Grace,) I cannot tell how that of our Saviour is intelligible *Matth.* 5. 6. *Blessed are they that hunger*, &c. *i. e.* desire sincerely as all agree. The Ungracious, Unrighteous are not Blessed, but Cursed; now according to the supposition of the Text these have nothing to entitle them to Blessedness, save this *Hunger*, &c. or *Desire*, therefore this Desire constitutes them so far Righteous, as not to leave them liable to the curse due to the Unrighteous. 2. It mistakes and misses the case, for sure there's a World of difference betwixt Internal Dispositions of Mind, and External Possessions. One

more

more imperfect diſpoſition of Mind, is capable of being changed into, or growing up to a more perfect habit, and therefore may be inchoatively that habit; and alſo it is very poſſible, that the firſt actings of a Grace already received may be in a deſire of that Grace, as well as the more mature ſtate of that Grace, may diſcover it ſelf in ſtrong deſire after a greater meaſure of it ſelf. 'Tis certain that the more grown and vigorous our Faith is, the more do we deſire the increaſe of it, ſo *Delight*, *Hope*, *Fear of God*, *Humility*; and in ſumm, no Man can ſincerely deſire any Grace, without Grace, becauſe without Grace there can be no Sincerity, that is the Adjunct without the Subject: Sincerity being the Eucracy, or good Conſtitution, and Form, and Beauty of Grace, which cannot be found if it be not. Now to transfer this to External Enjoyments, or bodily good things, is to leap over the Hedge into a ſophiſm of no very graceful Name. I think there are other more ſolid Methods, to club down preſumptuous Hypocritical Deſires, than thus to break the bruiſed Reed and rotten Stick with one and the ſame blow. I do not ſay that deſires of Comfort are Comfort, I know very well that Deſires, in no manner of Gradation or Modification can be a ſpecies of Comfort, as Deſires may be of Grace; nor an inferiour degree of Comfort neither. Yet though they cannot be formally Comfort, they may be objectively Comfortable. That is, ſincere deſires upon reflection, will be matter of Comfort; 'twill be a rejoycing to a Man's Heart, to find therein thoſe hungring and thirſting deſires, which the forementiond Scripture recommends. I know not that any can ever have

reason to repent, of *hearty Breathings and Pantings after the Living God*, and that plentitude of all desireable *Joys*, in fruition of his transcendent Perfections, which is sufficient to repleniſh and answer all the cravings of the moſt enlarged Appetite, even unto Satiety. And 'tis certain that without ſuch deſires, Divine Bounty it ſelf, infinite though it be, will not adminiſter the leaſt drop of the Cup of Conſolation, as 'tis called, *Jer.* 16. 7. Indeed ſince 'tis *God which comforteth thoſe which are caſt down*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 6. we have little ground to expect his Comforts, if we never deſire them, and little evidence can we give of our true deſires, if we convert them not into Prayers; nor can our Prayers prevail if not made in Faith, *Jam.* 1. 5, 6. For that's the Grace of Graces, which muſt be at every end, or nothing can proſper. The Son of God himſelf, the Lord, Owner, and Poſſeſſor of all, yet did not obtain the Comforter for us without *Prayer*, *Joh.* 14. 16. And 'tis no diſhonour to be ty'd to the ſame Conditions with our *Redeemer*, in things accommodate to our Nature and State. If he procured the Cauſe of Comfort, he will bleſs our uſe of the means, which if we neglect we (what in us lies) fruſtrate the *Interceſſion of Chriſt*, and by omiſſion of our Duty of *Prayer*, which is a part even of *Natural Religion*, we cauſe, as to our ſelves, a denial and rejection of the *Prayer of Chriſt* himſelf. And how can we expect that God ſhould hear us Praying for our ſelves afterward, when we ſee a neceſſity to change our Minds, and ſue for that Mercy for our ſelves, which once we would not receive, or ſo much as deſire, as an anſwer to the *Petitions* of our *Mediator*.

Be

Be not a Stranger to thine own Heart, yet do not think to dig thy Peace out of thine own Bowels. If it be a comforting reviving thing to find in thy self the truth of Grace, yet that refreshing vertue of Grace it self is from God. Whence we find some that although they be tolerably satisfied of their soundness, yet through Ignorance, or Inadvertency, or Melancholy, or Temptation, &c. cannot settle in a calm and quiet composure of Mind. For, as I said, the Assurance of the truth of a Man's Grace, is only comforting, as it is the ground of his Assurance of the *Love of God*, of which if a Man be not satisfied, *i. e.* that true Grace is an infallible evidence, that God does embrace him with his special Love, and is at peace with him through Christ, his Conscience will not be at rest, for it cannot rest in discord with God, whose Deputy 'tis in Man. Now some are so weak, as not to understand this; others so oppress't with dumpishness of Spirit, as not to heed it; others so deluded by Satan as not to believe it; which mists if not dispell'd, damp the comfort of Grace. Look therefore to the *Sun of Righteousness* to clear up thy Comforts, by expeling this Darkness. Seek abroad for Peace. The Bee finds not her Honey at home, without the labour of her Wings. Let thy Supplications then, O my Soul, be continually winging thy Affections towards Heaven, that they may there *suck and be satisfied, with the full Brests of Divine Consolation, milk out and be delighted with the abundance of its Glory.* The *Celestial Canaan* is the Land that flows with the Milk and Honey of Divine and Spiritual Joy, into which as at first thou passest over the *Jordan* of Repen- *Isa. 66.*

tance, not upon dry ground, but wafted by the breath of Prayer: So must thou take possession of it in Armour, fighting the good Fight of *Faith*, with Heart and Hands (like *Moses*) lift up in earnest Supplications. *The Spirit of God is upon Christ, because the Lord hath anointed him. To appoint to them that mourn in Sion, to give them Beauty for Ashes, the Oyl of Joy for Mourning*, &c. If it be his Gift, to him must we address for it. The Tree from whence this Oyl of Gladness flows, is planted in the Paradise of God; descend to thee it shall not, unless thou ascend to it, and be ingrafted in the same Stock. Oh transplant thy self from Earth to Heaven, and take root at the Throne of Grace, fix thy self and grow at the Footstool of Mercy by Prayer, if as a Tree of Righteousness thou wouldst draw in, be nourish'd and refresh'd by those consolatory dews of Divine Love, which are the spring of that River of the Waters of Life, *which makes glad the City of God.*

*Exod.* 17. 11.

*Isa.* 61. 1, 3.

Be more above with the *Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort*, in these Devout and Ardent Suspirations, than below glued to the Earth by Carnal Affections, if thou desirest to be a *Barnabas*, (may I thus transfer it from its active to a passive Sense) a *Son*, an *Heir*, an *Inheritor* of Celestial Consolations. If thou canst but pray indeed thou art secure; the furious Waves of these two meeting Seas, Sin and Suffering, may wrack thee, but cannot swallow thee up: Sink perhaps thou maist, but Drown thou canst not; the gentle Gales of the Spirit in this duty will most safely transport thee, to the Haven of Everlasting

lasting Joy and Peace, even in the ruin of all thy Fortunes. Thy Miseries, thy Corruptions shall perish, thou thy self shalt not; so true is that Saying of a Reverend Bishop, *Fashionable Suppliants may talk to God, but be confident he that can truly pray can never be miserable. Of our selves we lie open to all Evils, our rescue is from above, and what intercourse have we with Heaven but by our Prayers?* This is his *Catholicon.* Bp. *Hall.*

*Seneca* advises his *Lucilius*, to superadd new to his old Prayers, *to ask a good Soul, good Health of Mind, then of Body, Why dost not oft renew these Requests? Beg of God boldly.* —— *So live with Men, as if God saw, so speak to God as if Men heard.* A good Precept; to which adjoyn the like from the wisest of Men, *Eccles.* 5. 1, 2. *Keep thy Foot when thou goest into the House of God, &c. Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thine Heart be hasty to utter any thing before God. For God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy Words be few.* 'Tis not much speaking but hearty that God regards, not the Tongue of Men and Angels, but Truth in the inward Parts. Broken Expressions from a broken Heart, are as sweet Eloquence in the esteem of God, as the best in *Tully* or *Demosthenes.* Epist. 10. *Quidni tu ista vota sæpe facias? audacter Deum roga.*

Oh then, pour out thy Prayers as a Flood, *Isa.* 26. 16. If thou desirest they should return in a Tyde of Peace. They can never reach Heaven, if they have not a spring of Grace within, they will never be received there, if not the warm Exhalations, Transpirations of a melting contrite Heart,

drawn out, and drawn up by the dissolving attractive Rayes of the Son of *Righteousness*: If the Divine Spirit infuse this Breath into thee, it will follow him to Heaven, and through his Influence, who is the *Comforter*, possess thee of the fulness of the Comforts of *Elshaddai*, *God all-sufficient*: If as a cloven Tongue of Fire, the *Holy Ghost* descend and sit upon thee, *and give thee utterance*, Acts 2. 3, 4. not merely in conference with Men, but *secret speech*, Isa. 26. 16. with God: If he envigorate and heat thy Graces and Affections, *that the Fire burn within*, Psal. 39. 3. *and give speech to thy Tongue*: If he cast the pure Incense of Spiritual Devotion, upon that flaming Altar, thy fervent, zealous Heart, that may ascend in a sweet smelling Cloud, to the Throne of God: If lastly, this Fire from Heaven fall upon thy Sacrifice, as a testimony of the audience of thy Prayers, then wilt *thou shout for Joy*, Levit. 9. ult. and triumph in his *Salvation*. If thou would'st entertain any grounded hopes, that the Lord will speak comfortably to thy Heart; oh do thy utmost by Premeditation, by Reading, by Ejaculation, &c. [ἀναζωπυρεῖν] *to blow up into a living Fire*, those Divine Sparks of the Grace of Prayer, which the Spirit doth cast within thee, as a preparation for thy solemn Exercise in the duty of Prayer it self; and let thy Supplications be rather the inward workings of thy Heart in aversation from Sin, and panting after God, by godly Sorrow, Repentance, Desire, Faith, Love, Resignation, &c. than the labour of thy Lips, and a bodily Exercise, or the Work of an enlarged invention, and fancy, or strong Head and Memory, which are but dead things, mere Carcasses of Devotion,

not

not to be inſiſted on in Competiton with an enlarged Heart. *Take with thee Words, and turn unto the Lord.* Lord at thy bidding I will take thy Words which thy ſelf here preſcribes, *Hoſea* 14. 2, 3. They ſhall be my ſtinted *Liturgy*; none can tell which will be acceptable to thee better than thy ſelf. What are they? *Take away Iniquity and receive us graciouſly, ſo will we render the Calves of our Lips.* What's that? The ſubſtance is *Praiſe*: But ſome Antients thus deſcant upon it. *Calves* not of our *Stall*, Mal. 4. 2. but *Lips.*] When a Calf or other Beaſt was to be Sacrificed (to which this is an alluſion) God required the *Blood*, the *Fat*, and ſometimes the *Fleſh*, but never the Skin and Hair; theſe were to be carried away and burnt in another place. The *Blood* of theſe Calves of the Lips is *Faith* in the Blood of Chriſt, which is the Life of Prayer and Praiſe. The *Fat*, pure, and holy Affection, and Grace, Sorrow, Deſire, Love, Delight, Hope, &c. The *Fleſh* is the matter, or thing prayed for, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, Redemption, &c. The Skin and Hairs, the Words, and Expreſſions, with the Method, Mode, Order, which if alone, and not ſpirited with the former, are of no value with God, who looks at *Things*, not *Words* and *Phraſes*. They muſt indeed be brought to God in vocal Prayer, which is never a Duty, except when we joyn with others, and they with us, and we muſt ſee that all accord with, or do not diſagree from the general Rules of the *Scripture*. But 'tis a folly to think that we for theſe are more acceptable in Perſon, or that our Prayers, the *Fleſh*, the *Fat*, the *Blood*, are more well-pleaſing to God. We muſt not lay any ſtreſs upon, put any confi-

dence

dence in that, which God will not vouchsafe his Altar to Sanctifie.

Offer then even this vocal Prayer: God expects in some cases, this in Conjunction, but take heed, O my Soul, of relying upon it, as such, *viz.* the *Skin* without the other, in Separation. Whether form or no form, what matters it, 'tis but Skin and Hair. Why so much adoe about it? Give the main to God, or thou giveſt nothing. God will take off the Skin, and burn it; burn not thy Fingers about it; 'tis not for the Altar. Oh bring that chiefly which muſt be preſented there. God is a Spirit, what are Words to him? Oh let thy Prayers be all Spirit. Words are but the vehicle, ſometimes only *Aereal*, mere Wind, ſeldom *Æthereal*, defecate and pure Quinteſſence, without Froth and Vanity, *&c.* However, O ſee thou that there be an Angel within; if there be not an Intelligence to turn about this Orb of Devotion; if a Soul do not animate this Body of Duty, away with it, to the dunghil with it, 'tis but mere Carrion. Bring *the Male in thy Flock, not this corrupt thing.* Thou canſt never derive Comfort from Heaven, if thou lay nothing upon God's Altar but Froth and Wind. Subſtantial Prayers, (and all ſubſtance is an inviſible, inward thing) and theſe alone introduce ſolid and ſubſtantial Conſolations.

2 Theſ. 2. 16. *Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and given us everlaſting Conſolation through Grace,*

17. *Comfort your Hearts, and ſtabliſh you in every good Word and Work.*

1. Theſ.

1 Theſ. 5. 23. *And the very God of Peace ſanctifie you wholly, and I pray God your whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, be preſerved blameleſs unto the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Heb. 13. 20. *Now the God of Peace, who bath raiſed from the Dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant;*

21. *Make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

*FINIS.*

The

THE

# CONTENTS.


Chap. THE Introduction, with the Explication
I. of the Terms, and their Sense Critical and Moral, and Doctrine. page 1.

II. The Doctrine explained, in a Resolution of three Queries, a three-fold Essay. p. 9.

1. The Character of the Psalmist, not so much Personal as Moral, which determines the Subject universally. p. 10.

1. He was a Man that lived under a due and deep sense of God. ibid.

III. 2. He was a Man of Prayer. p. 18.

IV. 3. That lived by Faith, not by Sight. p. 25.

V. 4. That did not live under the reproach of his own conscience. p. 31.

1. He was very sensible of the odiousness of Sin to God. ibid.

VI. 2. Conscientious in the observance of his Duty to Man. p. 45.

VII. 5. Of a Publick Spirit. p. 73.

VIII. 6. Honours God's Discipline, Instructive, Corrective. p. 121.

IX. 7. A Man of Experience, Eyes God in all things. p. 133.

X. 8. Seeks Comfort solely in, and from God. p. 140.

XI. 2. The Nature and Quality of the Psalmists Thoughts. p. 151.

1. Fearing Thoughts. p. 156.

2. Grieving Thoughts. p. 164.

3. Despair-

3. *Despairing Thoughts.* page 174.
XII. 3. *What Comforts these are in general.* p. 175.
XIII. 1. *Comforts in God, which God is derived from.* p. 182.
1. *His Existence.* ibid.
2. *His Names and Titles.* p. 183.
3. *His Attributes.* p. 184.
§. 1. *His Wisdom and Omniscience* p. 185.
2. *His Goodness.* p. 189.
3. *His Justice.* p. 207.
4. *His Omnipotence* p. 224.
5. *His Fidelity and Unchangableness* p. 234.
6. *His Presence.* p. 241.
7. *His Eternity.* p. 258.
XIV. 2. *Comforts from God, which God gives in,* p. 265.
1. *Providence.* p. 266.
2. *Privileges.* p. 269.
1. *Sanctification* ibid.
2. *Propriety in God, and assurance of it.* p. 276.
3. *Experiences.* p. 286.
XV. *Inferences.*
1. *Doctrinal,* 1. *'tis lamentable to be left to our own Thoughts.* p. 296.
2. *The best may be in perplexities inextricable by Nature.* p. 298.
3. *The infinite Condescention of God in the Provision he hath made for us.* p. 302.
XVI. 2. *Elenctical.*
1. *Convictive.*
1. *Theoretical, confutes the Doctrine of Incertitude.* p. 305.
2. *Practical, establishing the conscience in the right method of discriminating true and false Comforts, which differ.* p. 309.

1. *In*

1. *In their Origin.* p. 310.
2. *Their Attendants.* p. 317.
3. *Their tendency and effects.* p. 330.
2. *Reprehensive for neglect of preparing for, and possessing our selves of Divine Comforts.* p. 337.
XVII. 3. *Paideutical or Instructive, how to attain solid Comforts.* p. 352.
1. *Be Men of Thoughts.* p. 353.
2. *Indeavour to attain Ability, to give Law to Thoughts.* p. 361.
3. *Get a clear notion of God and Goodness.* p. 366.
4. *Lay the Foundation of Peace in Repentance and Holiness.* p. 375, 376.
5. *Be fervent and constant in Prayer.* p. 401.

---

## *ADVERTISEMENT.*

*These* BOOKS *are Published by the Reverend Mr.* Oliver Heywood, M. A. *Minister of the Gospel, and Sold by* Thomas Parkhurst, *at the* Bible *and* Three Crowns *in* Cheapside, *viz.*

1. BAptismal Bonds Renewed, being some Meditations on *Psal.* 50. 5.
2. Closet Prayer a Christians Duty.
3. Sure Mercies of *David.*
4. *Israels* Lamentation after the Lord.
5. The Holy Life and Happy Death, of Mr. *John Angier*, Minister formerly at *Denton*, near *Manchester.*

6. Advice

6. Advice to an only Child, or excellent Counſel to all young Perſons.

7. Beſt Intail, a Diſcourſe on 2 *Sam.* 23. 5.

8. Family Altar, a Diſcourſe on *Gen.* 35. 2, 3. for to promote the Worſhip of God in private Families.

9. Meetneſs for Heaven on *Coloſ.* 1. 12. deſigned for a Funeral Legacy.

10. The New Creature on *Gal.* 6. 15. lately Publiſhed.

11. The General Aſſembly, or a Diſcourſe of the gathering of all Saints to Chriſt.

---

## BOOKS *Written by the Reverend Mr.* J. How.

OF Thoughtfulneſs for the Morrow: With an Appendix concerning the immoderate Deſire of Foreknowing Things to come.

Of Charity, in reference to other Mens Sins.

A Sermon at the Funeral of Mr. *Richard Adams*, M. A. ſometime Fellow of *Brazen-Noſe* College in *Oxford*.

The Redeemer's Tears wept over loſt Souls: In a Treatiſe on *Luke* 19. 41, 42. With an Appendix, wherein ſomewhat is occaſionally diſcourſed, concerning the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and how God is ſaid to will the Salvation of them that periſh.

A Sermon directing what we are to do after a ſtrict enquiry, Whether or no we truly love God.

A Funeral Sermon for Mrs. *Eſther Sampſon*, the late Wife of *Henry Sampſon*, Doctor of Phyſick.

The Carnality of Religious Contention. In Two

Two Sermons, preach'd at the Merchants Lecture in *Broad-ſtreet.*

A Sermon for Reformation of Manners.

A Sermon preach'd on the Day of Thankſgiving, *December* 2. 1697. to which is prefix'd Dr. *Bates*'s Congratulatory Speech to the King.

A Calm and Sober Enquiry, concerning the Poſſibility of a Trinity in the God-head.

A Letter to a Friend, concerning a Poſtſcript to the Defence of Dr. *Sherlock's* Notion of the Trinity in Unity, relating to the Calm and Sober Enquiry upon the ſame Subject.

A View of that part of the late Conſiderations to *H. H.* about the Trinity: Which concerns the Sober Enquiry on that Subject.

The Redeemer's Dominion over the Inviſible World.

A Funeral Sermon for Mrs. *Hammond.*

A Funeral Sermon for Dr. *Will. Bates.*

A Funeral Sermon for Mr. *Mat. Mead.*

---

*This Written by Mr.* Flavel.

THE Fountain of Life open'd, or a Diſplay of Chriſt in his Eſſential and Mediatorial Glory; containing Forty two Sermons on various Texts. Wherein the Impetration of our Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt is orderly unfolded, as it was begun, carried on, and finiſhed by his Covenant Tranſaction, Myſterious Incarnation, ſolemn Call and Dedication, bleſſed Offices, deep Abaſement, and Supereminent Advancement.